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Human resources management

Measures to improve the balance in the geographical distribution of the staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides information on the measures taken in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve the geographical distribution of staff in that Office, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/236.

* A/63/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The issue of the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been raised by the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council as a matter of concern in several resolutions adopted after 1997. This issue was addressed in reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/59/65 and A/62/845), with responses from the Secretary-General issued as addenda (A/59/65/Add.1 and A/62/845/Add.1). In its resolution 61/159, the General Assembly regretted that efforts to address the imbalance regarding the regional geographical diversity of the staff of OHCHR had not resulted in a significant improvement. Subsequently, the Assembly adopted resolution 61/244, in which it requested the Secretary-General to present to it proposals to address the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff in that Office.

2. The Secretary-General presented his report on the measures to address the imbalance in the geographical distribution of the staff in OHCHR (A/61/823), after which the General Assembly addressed this issue in its resolution 62/236.

3. The present report is submitted in accordance with resolution 62/236, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to implement urgent measures to improve the balance in the geographical distribution in OHCHR, including through recruitment for newly established posts, and to report on the results achieved at its sixty-third session. Detailed information on the staffing situation in OHCHR is provided regularly to the Human Rights Council by the High Commissioner in her reports on the composition of the staff of the Office, the last such report being A/HRC/7/57.

II. Measures currently being implemented

4. Improving geographical diversity in OHCHR remains one of the priorities of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In line with this objective, the Office continues to vigorously implement the measures identified in the Secretary-General's report A/61/823, including the High Commissioner's procedures and framework for improving geographical diversity, as described in detail in paragraphs 17 and 18 of that report.

5. Following the national competitive recruitment examinations in human rights held in 2001 and 2005, another round of human rights examinations was held at the beginning of 2008. For those examinations the Office of Human Resources Management, in collaboration with OHCHR, invited the participation of Member States that were unrepresented or underrepresented in the Secretariat and required geographical improvement in OHCHR. A total of 49 Member States were invited to participate, and 41 of them attracted 845 applicants (there were no applicants from 8 Member States). A total of 326 candidates were invited to participate, 72.4 per cent of whom (236) sat for the examination in February 2008. An Examination Board comprising OHCHR staff with the necessary expertise is expected to complete the marking of the examinations by September 2008. It is expected that these examinations will result in a larger pool of successful candidates from Member States requiring geographical improvement in OHCHR on the roster for selection against vacant, regular budget P-2 and P-3 positions.

6. In addition to advertising vacancies through the established procedures, OHCHR continues to ensure the widest possible circulation of vacancy notices, using the mailing list of over 1,200 governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights, national human rights institutions and academic institutions willing to disseminate this information. OHCHR also shares the vacancy notices with its offices in the field for wider local distribution in the countries where the offices are located.

7. These ongoing efforts are yielding positive results. Thus, from 122 selection decisions for Professional posts taken by OHCHR since the introduction of the High Commissioner's procedures and framework for improving geographical diversity, 72 decisions (60 per cent) were made in favour of candidates from regions requiring improved representation in OHCHR. On the other hand, of the 50 selections from the regions that are well represented in OHCHR, 32 were in respect of internal staff who had been transferred or promoted, thus having no net impact on the geographical balance of the Office. There has been similar progress with regard to senior posts at the P-5 and higher levels. Some 28 selection decisions have been made for senior posts since the procedures were introduced, of which 16 (58 per cent) were in favour of candidates from regions requiring improved representation in OHCHR.

8. A substantial improvement in the overall geographic diversity of OHCHR during the last 18 months can be noted. Using the methodology applied by the Joint Inspection Unit for reviewing the representation in the Office at the level of geographical groups (see A/59/65 and A/61/115), the OHCHR staffing statistics in the table below clearly show that the Office has significantly increased the percentage of staff from regions identified as requiring improved representation in OHCHR:

Staff representation in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by regional group

	31 December 2006		*30 June 2007*		*31 December 2007*		*30 June 2008*	
Region	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Africa	44	11.1	51	12.3	55	13.1	63	13.3
Asia	47	11.9	52	12.6	53	12.6	63	13.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	38	9.6	45	10.9	50	11.9	60	12.6
Eastern Europe	13	3.3	17	4.1	20	4.8	20	4.2
Western Europe and other	253	64.1	248	60.0	241	57.5	269	56.6
Total	**395**	**100**	**413**	**100**	**419**	**100**	**421**	**100**

9. While OHCHR is improving regional diversity among staff of the Office, it is important to note that the Office does not have any targets, benchmarks or methodologies mandated by legislative bodies to measure success in this respect, apart from the system of desirable ranges mandated by the General Assembly. The

composition of OHCHR does not, in this regard, differ in any meaningful manner from the composition of the Secretariat at a whole.

10. As approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/159, OHCHR has proceeded with the temporary mechanism whereby its recruitment of staff at the P-2 level is not restricted to successful candidates from the national competitive recruitment examination. With support from the Office of Human Resources Management, OHCHR has started advertising extrabudgetary P-2 positions, which are not subject to geographical distribution, through the Galaxy system. Since so far only two such posts have been put forward as they became vacant, it is too early to judge the impact of this measure.

11. In line with the General Assembly's pronouncement in its resolution 61/159, OHCHR encourages Member States sponsoring associate experts to extend their national programmes to nationals from developing countries. Similarly, OHCHR encourages Member States that are not traditionally providers of associate experts to review the possibility of their contribution to this important programme. The High Commissioner for Human Rights has reiterated this invitation in plenary meetings of the Human Rights Council. The Office has also consistently raised this issue in discussions with representatives of the Member States.

III. Conclusions and recommendation

12. The Secretary-General will continue to consider improvement of the geographical representation of staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a matter of priority and support all efforts to achieve this goal.

13. **The General Assembly is invited to take note of the present report.**

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Operational activities for development

Advancement of women

Activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, prepared pursuant to Assembly resolution 39/125.

Summary

The present report provides a review and update of cumulative progress of the programme and activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) identified in its multi-year funding framework 2004-2007. The report tracks overall progress and highlights concrete results of the support that UNIFEM provided to countries in 2007. The report concludes with a set of recommendations on the ways in which the development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness of UNIFEM can be further strengthened.

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I. Introduction

1. The past year was one of opportunity, challenge and change for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) with the adoption of the latest General Assembly resolution, on UNIFEM resolution 62/135, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the mandate of UNIFEM, and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 62/208, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; in the section of resolution 62/208 on gender equality and women's empowerment, the Assembly called upon the United Nations system to avail itself of the technical experience of UNIFEM on gender issues (para. 64). UNIFEM engaged in intensive consultations on — and secured approval of — its strategic plan for 2008-2011 from the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA. Moreover, in 2007 UNIFEM registered significant growth in its resource base, breaking the $100 million mark in total contributions, as well as securing (and, in fact, surpassing) the 2007 and the targets of the multi-year funding framework for regular and other resources. At the same time, debates in the intergovernmental arena, civil society and other forums intensified on how to strengthen the ability of the United Nations system to support countries in advancing gender equality.

2. The year 2008 marks the mid-point of the 15-year period during which Member States have agreed to reach the Millennium Development Goals. With gender equality and women's empowerment recognized as goals in their own right, as well as central to achieving all the international development goals — including the Millennium Development Goals — the work of UNIFEM and other gender-specialist organizations is of great importance. There is a critical need to ensure that UNIFEM has the capacity, influence, focus and resources to fulfil its dual mandate of providing direct assistance at the country level while being a key driver to assist the United Nations system in adequately supporting countries as they advance gender equality and women's empowerment in line with national priorities.

II. Context

3. The Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Millennium Development Goals, and a growing number of national and regional action plans, laws and policies on gender equality frame the work of UNIFEM in support of gender equality. In 2007, UNIFEM intensified its support for developing sustainable national capacity in the implementation of, and accountability for, commitments to gender equality by continuing to focus on four key goals: reducing feminized poverty; ending violence against women; addressing the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS; and achieving gender equality in democratic governance. The prospects and gaps worldwide, nationally and regionally in relation to those four goals determine the focus of the work of UNIFEM.

4. In 2007, changes in development assistance, framed by the aid effectiveness agenda and the Paris Declaration, had a significant influence on UNIFEM programming, as did new opportunities and challenges related to United Nations reform processes. A key role for UNIFEM is to build knowledge and capacity among gender equality advocates so as to strengthen gender equality in those processes.

III. Development effectiveness

A. Outcome 1
Legislation and policies at the national and regional levels are formulated and implemented to promote and protect women's human rights

5. Laws and policies that reinforce discrimination and exclusion also foster unequal power relations. Gender equality advocates have addressed this by pressing for removal of discriminatory provisions from existing laws and policies and for the introduction of a legal framework aligned with commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international and regional normative frameworks. By the end of 2007, 185 countries had ratified the Convention, and 90 have ratified its optional protocol.

6. Between 2004 and 2007 UNIFEM contributed to strengthening legal and policy frameworks in 90 countries, removing gender-discriminatory provisions in 9 countries; supporting the introduction or implementation of laws and policies to promote women's rights in 38 countries and 2 regional bodies; strengthening gender-equality provisions in constitutions in 5 countries; and mobilizing additional resources for gender equality by bringing a stronger gender equality perspective to national development strategies and/or poverty reduction strategies in 13 countries. Together with United Nations partners, UNIFEM provided support to over 80 countries in reporting on and/or strengthening capacity to implement the Convention.

Laws and policies to promote women's human rights and advance gender equality

7. To build and strengthen legal mechanisms that empower women, UNIFEM supports national partners to introduce and implement gender equality policies and legislation, including those related to reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women, and strengthening democratic governance. In 2007, in addition to assisting efforts at the national level, UNIFEM supported the formulation of a regional gender policy for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In many cases, initiatives involve the provision of experts to national women's machineries and supporting consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to elaborate, for example, a draft law on gender parity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a draft national gender policy in Liberia, and a law to end gender discrimination that incorporates the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in Mauritania. In other cases, UNIFEM focuses on the implementation process, as in Viet Nam, where it is supporting capacity development among national assembly members and the chief justices of provincial courts to implement the gender equality law that came into effect in 2007.

8. For the past three years, UNIFEM has been supporting national partners in developing a systematic approach to mainstream gender equality priorities into national development strategies. This involves facilitating national multi-stakeholder technical teams to align national commitments under the Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action into a

consolidated set of indicators and priorities; and sharpening advocacy and lobbying skills. Concrete achievements are now being secured for example in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan. The national development strategy of Tajikistan commits the Government to ensuring equal access for men and women to economic resources; to support female entrepreneurship; and to implement the Presidential decree on a quota for higher education for rural girls and boys. The Kyrgyzstan national development strategy supports temporary special measures for both elective and executive offices to increase political representation of women, and commits the Government to undertake gender analysis of school curricula and textbooks, take into account gender differences in pension reform, and implement measures to end violence against women; and the Georgia Economic Recovery and Poverty Reduction Paper includes a commitment to improve the gender-responsiveness of labour legislation, reduce harmful practices against women — including family violence — and implement a four-year plan to implement gender equality, as adopted in the political statement of the Parliament.

9. In addition to overarching gender equality policies and legislation, UNIFEM contributed to progress in reducing feminized poverty through support to strengthen relevant legal or policy frameworks in 37 countries over the past four years, working with national and United Nations partners. UNIFEM support focuses on context-specific opportunities and challenges, including enhancing rural women's access to land, property and inheritance rights in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in West Africa; strengthening gender dimensions of agricultural policy, including in West Africa; providing assistance to organizing strategies of home-based women workers and migrant women workers in the Arab States and Asia; and expanding economic options for women producers in countries recovering from armed conflict and for those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in Southern and West Africa.

10. UNIFEM has documented catalytic efforts to strengthen policies to protect the rights of women migrant workers. Its programme to support women migrant workers in Asia and the Arab States was launched in 2001. A cornerstone of the programme is to bring government representatives from countries of origin and destination together to ensure that the rights of migrant women are protected, and to build knowledge and awareness among migrant women workers about their rights.

11. The results of this work in countries of origin can be seen in Nepal, which in 2007 adopted a foreign employment act removing discriminatory provisions (including an embargo on women travelling to Gulf States). Nepalese women migrants now receive information about the contractual obligations of employers and about migrant assistance centres in destination countries. Passage of the law was facilitated by the national network of migrant women workers in partnership with the Migrants Forum for Asia. Nepalese women have also partnered with the organization Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility, Asia, to safeguard migrant women workers' rights in Hong Kong, Israel, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

12. With regard to ending violence against women, UNIFEM focuses on this goal area through direct support to partners at the national and regional levels. The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, administered by UNIFEM, also focuses on this area. The Secretary-

General's report on the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1 and Corr.1) indicated that 89 countries now have some form of legal provision against domestic violence, 93 on trafficking in persons and 90 against sexual harassment, while in 104 countries, marital rape may be prosecuted. UNIFEM contributed to strengthening laws and policies on violence against women, registering progress in 38 countries in 2007 compared to 35 in 2006, 13 in 2005 and 14 in 2004. Of these initiatives, about 40 per cent focused on domestic violence, 30 per cent on general violence against women, 15 per cent on trafficking and 5 per cent on female genital mutilation or sexual harassment. Programmes are increasingly working with police and justice systems, as well as with men and boys, to focus more systematically on the implementation of laws and policies.

13. In the area of democratic governance, UNIFEM works with a wide range of United Nations partners, most often UNDP, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to assist national partners in assessing needs and in drafting, adopting and implementing positive action laws and policies for women's political participation, including in post-conflict countries. During the period of its multi-year funding framework, it did so in 16 countries and regionally in the context of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. In 2007, for example, UNIFEM supported the University of Indonesia in reviewing five laws related to the electoral process and political parties. Findings were endorsed by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Women's Empowerment, which proposed amending existing laws to establish a quota for women.

14. With regard to promoting gender equality in the financing for development and aid effectiveness debates, UNIFEM has embarked on a multi-pronged strategy, especially in the lead-up to the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana, to take place in September 2008, and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha in December 2008. In 2007, focusing on building the capacity of gender equality advocates to navigate within the new frameworks, UNIFEM co-sponsored regional consultations on gender equality and aid effectiveness with host country Governments in Africa (Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia), the Asia-Pacific region (Indonesia) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (Kazakhstan), which brought together representatives from Governments — including national women's machineries and planning officials — legislatures, civil society, and United Nations and donor organizations to build partnerships and devise strategies for ensuring attention to gender equality in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Participants adopted recommendations in declarations intended to feed into national, regional and global discussions on further implementing the Paris Declaration that will be articulated in the Accra Agenda for Action.

15. UNIFEM has translated the concrete recommendations from these consultations into programming and the creation of a broader knowledge base on gender equality and aid effectiveness. In 2007, with the European Commission and the International Labour Organization International Training Centre, it launched the European Commission-United Nations Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace (www.gendermatters.eu). This includes analysis and dissemination of national mapping studies on the impact of new aid modalities on gender equality and women's empowerment in 12 countries, and the development of

country-specific strategies to monitor the impact of the Paris Declaration on gender equality.

Challenges and lessons learned

16. The multi-year funding framework evaluation found that UNIFEM support to changing policies and laws was one of its strongest areas of work, but that its reports provide little information on the degree to which legislative changes have been implemented and to what changes they have contributed. There is a lack of knowledge as to what is required to move from commitment to action on gender equality. This is a key area of focus in the new strategic plan and the topic of an in-depth exploration in UNIFEM's *Progress of the World's Women Report for 2008* (to be issued shortly).

B. Outcome 2
Mainstream institutions demonstrate leadership, commitment, technical capacity and accountability for gender equality

17. Moving from commitment to implementation and accountability for gender equality means that the mainstream institutions that generate policies and services need to strengthen capacity for delivering to women and girls. At the heart of effective gender mainstreaming in any institution is the reshaping of incentive systems to support better responses to women's needs; changing performance measures so that services to meet women's needs are recorded and rewarded; incorporating gender-responsive budgeting; and institutionalizing effective leadership to champion gender equality and women's rights. In the last three years, UNIFEM documented support to nearly 90 countries in this outcome area.

Sex-disaggregated data

18. The focus on the Millennium Development Goals has increased interest in the production and use of sex-disaggregated data by Member States, and increasingly in the identification and use of a broader range of measurements of gender equality, including gender-based violence and feminized poverty. UNIFEM supported the long-term process of institutional change towards gender equality throughout the period of the multi-year funding framework by strengthening the capacities of national and local partners to institutionalize tools such as sex-disaggregated data (over 50 instances) and gender-responsive budgets (over 30 countries). In 2007, UNIFEM contributed to positive institutional changes with a broader range of national and regional partners, including ministries of finance, planning, labour, and justice; law enforcement; parliaments; national AIDS councils; municipalities; regional organizations; and private-sector partners.

Policies, programmes and resource allocations of mainstream organizations

19. UNIFEM support for gender-responsive budgeting in ministries of finance is having an effect on institutional policies and practices and on resource allocations. In Morocco, call circulars over the past three years have included requirements to mainstream gender in plans, budgets and performance monitoring indicators. The Ministry of Finance has also taken the lead in supporting the preparation of gender budget reports by sectoral ministries. In Ecuador, the UNIFEM programme of

support with the Council for Women has assisted the Ministry of Finance to introduce a specific budget line to track sectoral investments in implementing the equal opportunity plan. In Bolivia, UNIFEM-supported advocacy by the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral led to municipal budget guidelines that require municipalities to allocate resources to programmes that promote gender equality and provide services for women survivors of violence.

20. Bringing a gender-equality perspective to judicial and justice sector institutions is critical to women's ability to gain access to justice. Capacity development including through South-South exchanges for the staff of such institutions is a key strategy that has yielded concrete results. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women programme in South-East Asia, which started in 2004, supported the training of supreme court and appellate court judges, representatives of judicial training institutions, and advocates for a gender responsive judiciary in 2007, in accordance with a gender-equality education model introduced by resource persons from the Asia Pacific Forum on Judicial Education on Equality. A regional network of judges, judicial training institutions and activists has since been formed.

21. In 2007, the UNIFEM-executed and UNDP-supported programme on enhancing protection from gender-based violence in Rwanda, which supports women's networks to provide training in responding to domestic violence cases, expanded its work with the Rwanda Defence Forces, jointly training a total of 2,293 military officers, including 598 deployed in a peace mission in Darfur. A gender coordinating desk has been established within the Defence Forces with focal points attached at brigade and battalion levels; this has been replicated by the Sudan and Burundi. The police officers trained in the Rwanda programme have been called upon by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to share their experiences in Belgium and South Africa, respectively.

Challenges and lessons learned

22. Throughout the period of the multi-year funding framework, the work on gender-responsive budgeting has consistently yielded concrete results in terms of strengthening the internal policies and procedures of government ministries on gender equality. However, whether using gender-responsive budgeting or other entry points, institutional transformation is a long-term process requiring enduring commitments, in-depth support and clear benchmarks. This effort is a central focus of the UNIFEM strategic plan, 2008-2011.

C. Outcome 3
Gender equality advocates have knowledge and are positioned to spearhead and transform policies, programmes and resource allocations

23. UNIFEM supports and/or facilitates enhanced capacities of national and regional networks of gender equality advocates to secure more gender-equitable policies, programmes and resource allocations. UNIFEM supports Ministries of Women's Affairs, women legislators, and specialized groups, such as networks on HIV and women, migrant women, indigenous and rural women, and others. From

2004 to 2007 UNIFEM provided support or technical assistance to over 90 ministries of gender equality or women's affairs and contributed to the creation or strengthening of more than 100 national and regional non-governmental women's networks and organizations.

24. The most intensive UNIFEM programme of support to national women's machineries has been in Afghanistan, where it led to the establishment of an institutional capacity-building team within the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The team has focused on enhancing the capacity of the office of the Technical Deputy Minister and the Planning Department of the Ministry, and backstopping senior staff to enable the Planning Department to maintain a more effective balance between providing technical assistance and working on behalf of the Ministry.

25. Within the framework of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), UNIFEM support has enabled women in Southern Sudan to engage at the international level to make visible the critical gender and women's issues for peacebuilding and reconstruction within the context of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Cabinet has adopted the UNIFEM-supported publication *Gender Justice: Undertakings and Commitments to Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement* as a policy document on gender justice responses. UNIFEM assistance has enabled women members of parliament, across party lines, to meet and formally establish the Sudanese Women's Parliamentary Caucus. The caucus is supporting the development of a draft constitution and governance structure, a major step towards solidarity among women leaders. In Darfur, UNIFEM supported women to engage in the "Darfur dialogue", working to bring women across lines of conflict to build a common agenda for women in Darfur and to combine this with the demands of women in Khartoum to form a single set of requirements to influence the next round of peace talks.

Enhancing civil society participation in governance

26. New aid modalities offer opportunities for generating increased resources for women's empowerment. In Kenya, UNIFEM manages a "basket fund on gender and governance", which reached total contributions of over $9.5 million in 2007. The goal is to transform leadership and governance at all levels in Kenya in order to deliver on poverty reduction, access to basic needs and equality between and among persons. In 2007, it focused on supporting women's political aspirations towards the general elections of December 2007, assisting 35 organizations in strengthening women's leadership and gender balance in governance at different levels in nearly 200 out of the 210 constituencies. According to the Wangari Kinoti Education Centre for Women in Democracy, the recent elections produced the highest number of women legislators in Kenya's history. Fourteen women were elected to Parliament; the previous Parliament had 9 out of the 14, 8 are new to Parliament, and 1 was previously a nominated member. Only four retained their seats.

Challenges and lessons learned

27. The influence of women's organizations on mainstream policy processes is significant, but difficult to measure. UNIFEM intends to further focus its support to women's organizations in the next implementation phase of its strategic plan, 2008-2011, including by sharpening the mechanisms used to track changes in their

capacities and influence with improved tools for monitoring the impact of capacity development initiatives.

D. Outcome 4
Harmful and discriminatory attitudes and practices change to promote and protect the rights of women and girls

28. Until support for gender equality and women's human rights brings about positive changes in attitudes and behaviours at the microlevel, gender equality will remain elusive. There is significant work to be done on changing attitudes and practices to support gender equality in all regions.

Gender-responsive media coverage

29. In 2007 UNIFEM supported the increased capacity and scope of media organizations to generate messages and stories in support of gender equality in all regions where it works. UNIFEM is making more consistent use of its goodwill ambassadors, multimedia and the performing arts to support advocacy for concrete outcomes, such as changes in laws or policies. UNIFEM supported efforts in 45 countries to enhance the use of media for gender-equality objectives in 2007, including United Nations inter-agency regional campaigns for the "16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women" and campaigns that contributed to the development of national plans to end violence against women in Angola, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

National institutional mechanisms to prevent, reduce and monitor gender-based violence

30. Managed by UNIFEM, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (with participation in decision-making by 21 United Nations and non-governmental organizations each year) has awarded more than $19 million in grants to 263 projects in 115 countries since its inception in 1997. In 2007, 512 proposals were received, with requests totalling close to $105 million while the Programme Appraisal Committee had only $15.9 million to disburse. Grantee strategies include building awareness of new laws and policies; working with criminal and civil justice systems to develop procedures for investigation and restraining orders; enhancing the capacities of judiciaries, law enforcement and health workers; mobilizing communities, including men and marginalized groups, to put laws and plans into effect and promote their conformity with human rights standards; advocating for adequate budgetary allocations to implement laws and policies; creating data-collection systems and indicators at the national and local levels to assist in monitoring policies and laws; and building momentum through targeted mass-media campaigns.

31. The Safer Cities programme, in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UNDP and civil society organizations, supports policy reform, urban planning, and services to keep women safe from violence in selected neighbourhoods throughout Latin America. The programme is creating a model for women-friendly urban renewal, whereby women who live in unsafe neighbourhoods identify unsafe spaces and develop proposals to improve them, which are presented and "validated" by the local government, so that the unsafe situations will be

addressed. UNIFEM is sharing lessons learned with local government and NGO partners in Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

Gender disparity in economic resources

32. For many young women in the occupied Palestinian territories, the UNIFEM Sabaya (Young Women) programme, implemented in partnership with UNDP, means a pathway to empowerment. Sabaya centres empower women to become agents of change for a just, peaceful Palestinian society by promoting their participation in the social, economic and political life of their communities. Piloted in 2004, the programme has strengthened 18 women's centres in the West Bank and Gaza to provide legal advice, psychosocial counselling and other support services.

33. UNIFEM's most significant partnership in this category is with the World Bank, where the Fund is implementing a component of the Bank's Gender Action Plan supporting a programme on results-based initiatives in Liberia, Kenya, Peru, Egypt, and the Mekong region. The initiative is designed to demonstrate promising approaches for enhancing women's economic opportunities that can be scaled up by the Bank. Over the past year, the programme has engaged with national partners and technical experts in each country to design the results-based initiatives. In Liberia, the programme will support a collective of 500 women in rural Ganta to enhance their productions and marketing of cassava; in Kenya, the programme will work with 60 groups of Masai women to expand trade and markets for their beadwork products; in Egypt, the programme is securing the participation of private sector partners to become involved in a programme that will accredit their efforts to provide a more gender-responsive environment to women workers; in Peru, the programme will utilize land titling as an asset to strengthen women's entrepreneurship capacities; and in the Mekong region, the programme will make strategic investments to open up market opportunities for women in the bamboo handicraft sector. In each instance, UNIFEM, the World Bank and the International Centre for Research on Women have worked with local partners to support in-depth feasibility studies for each initiative, as well as to design and document impact evaluation and monitoring processes that will generate concrete evidence of what works.

Challenges and lessons learned

34. UNIFEM contributes to closing the gender gap in economic resources and assets by improving women's economic opportunities and organizing; challenging stereotypes that perpetuate inequality in income and wages; and working with public- and private-sector employers to encourage gender equality. An example in 2007 was its ongoing partnership with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to support women traders by building their capacity to access markets and understand the trade instruments of COMESA. UNIFEM supported training for women in business and export management in Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, assisting women's associations in focusing services to female informal cross-border traders. The initiative has stimulated policy dialogue between women in business associations and ministries of trade and industry.

35. Specialized skills and methods are needed to document and evaluate progress towards sustainable shifts in attitudes and practices regarding gender equality and

women's rights. Investment in developing these skills is critical given the contributions UNIFEM and others make in multimedia and advocacy campaigns. The multi-year funding framework evaluation found that the formulation of outcomes and indicators as well as some of the tracking mechanisms to assess progress were inadequate. UNIFEM will expand its work in this area (tracking mechanisms), especially in the context of United Nations inter-agency partnerships (including with UNICEF and UNFPA) and with regional and national partners.

IV. Organizational effectiveness

A. Goal 1
Coherence, relevance and sustainability of UNIFEM products

36. Catalytic UNIFEM programmes can continue to have an impact after UNIFEM involvement has ended when these are replicated or taken to scale by other partners. Between 2004 and 2007, UNIFEM tracked 79 instances of replication or upscaling of initiatives that it supported. In the Arab States and Africa, UNIFEM is linking government and private sector partners to enhance women's access to and control over the benefits of information and communications technologies, particularly to address feminized poverty. The successful pilot programme in Jordan with CISCO Systems has now been upscaled in that country and replications are in full swing in Morocco and Lebanon. UNIFEM is supporting a long-term capacity-building strategy in the Ministry of Education in Jordan to ensure that senior and mid-level staff can incorporate gender equality principles and practices in their work. And private sector partners — from Microsoft to Lego Robotics — are being drawn into the e-village programme that has developed as a spin-off of the CISCO initiative to expand economic opportunity in rural villages, including for women producers. The CISCO replication in Morocco — involving the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Professional Training, USAID, CISCO and UNIFEM — is the first time that a United Nations organization has had the opportunity to design a nationwide programme with a private sector company in the country.

37. Obtaining reliable, up-to-date information on the relevance of its programmes from high quality evaluations — and using the findings to consistently improve performance — is a high priority. UNIFEM undertook 34 evaluations during the multi-year funding framework period, including the evaluation of the framework itself, the findings of which were essential to the development of the strategic plan, 2008-2011.

38. In terms of communications, UNIFEM is moving away from broad-based awareness-raising to a more consistent use of multimedia — including radio, television, the Internet, goodwill ambassadors and the performing arts — in outcome-oriented processes, such as supporting national-level efforts to secure the passage of laws to end impunity for perpetrators of violence against women, lobbying for inclusion of women's human rights in new constitutions; and building consensus on positive action policies to generate greater opportunities for women candidates for political office. For example, in partnership with UNDP, UNIFEM supported a targeted publicity campaign in Timor-Leste to promote women as candidates and voters prior to the presidential and legislative elections. Women

voters' turnout in the legislative elections was approximately 60 per cent, and women won 28 per cent of the seats in the Parliament.

39. In 2007 UNIFEM began to focus its communications strategy on opportunities presented by new media, including blogs, social networking sites and text messaging, to build outreach to new constituencies. On World Poverty Day, UNIFEM and the Women's Funding Network, a global network of 124 women's funds, jointly called for greater investment in equal opportunities for women as a key to combating global poverty through a special website (www.womenfightpoverty.org). Within a 24-hour period close to 17,000 people visited the site; of these, some 7,000 signed on to the Stand Up campaign. Furthermore, more than 4,000 people asked to be kept informed about UNIFEM, thus expanding the organization's constituency beyond the single issue. On 26 November, UNIFEM launched a global Internet-based advocacy campaign, Say NO to Violence against Women with UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassador Nicole Kidman (www.saynotoviolence.org).

B. Goal 2
Capacity of UNIFEM programmes aligned with demand and opportunities to introduce and support innovation, learning and results

40. In its resolution 62/208, on the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations development system to avail itself of UNIFEM's technical experience on gender issues. UNIFEM contributes to United Nations coordination and action, and influences United Nations reform processes through its engagement with the common country assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategy paper initiatives, to which it provides technical expertise,[1] along with its role in the United Nations Development Group, regional directors' teams, and United Nations country teams. When successful, these efforts generate stronger commitments and monitoring mechanisms for ensuring that programming and resources benefit gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNIFEM involvement in coordination mechanisms	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
Millennium Development Goals	15	32	25	23
CCA/UNDAFs	14	37	42	40
Poverty reduction strategy papers and national development strategies	19	18	18	33

[1] **UNDAF:** Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Botswana, Burundi, Caribbean (regional), Cape Verde, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, India, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Moldova, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uruguay and Venezuela. **Millennium Development Goals:** Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Bolivia, Cambodia, Caribbean, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia.

41. The proliferation of coordination mechanisms and processes in United Nations reform present both opportunities and challenges for gender equality. UNIFEM is developing innovative approaches to lend its technical expertise more effectively. In Southern Africa, UNIFEM chairs the Gender and Human Rights Advisory Group of the Regional Directors' Team. The Group has identified capacity gaps in each of the gender theme groups in Eastern and Southern Africa and have trained a broader group of gender equality experts in the subregion so that United Nations country teams have access to a type of on-demand technical support. This experience is contributing to a partnership between UNIFEM and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to create a regional gender theme group that will enhance the impact of the work of the United Nations system in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through supporting inclusive gender equitable projects in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the region and building on best practices of respective partners. UNIFEM is engaged with the eight "Delivering as One" country pilots, often in response to United Nations resident coordinator or country team requests. In Albania, for instance, UNIFEM has been designated to coordinate country team efforts to develop a $3.5 million joint programme to improve implementation of the national strategy on gender equality and domestic violence, which falls under the overall national development strategy.

42. The UNIFEM subregional office in Ecuador concluded an agreement in 2006 with the five resident coordinators in the region that they would consult with UNIFEM for technical expertise on gender equality issues. In 2007, this was followed up with a high-level convening to review progress since the agreement. The second annual Andean subregional meeting of gender focal points and inter-agency gender working groups included the five resident coordinators and the UNDP Regional Director for Latin America. The group agreed to continue to strengthen inter-organization mechanisms for joint work and developed a workplan for gender-equality initiatives in the region, with the following priority themes: political participation; gender-based violence; and economic, social and cultural rights.

C. Goal 3
Strategic partnerships generate new and expanded constituencies and learning for gender equality

43. New opportunities to strengthen partnerships with United Nations organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral donors, civil society and private sector partners continued in 2007. In 2007 UNIFEM was a partner in more than 60 inter-agency initiatives at both field and headquarters levels, compared to approximately 50 in 2006. UNIFEM participated in 13 United Nations joint programmes on gender equality in 2007, compared to 7 in 2006. UNIFEM also generates expanded support for gender equality and women's empowerment through coordination and initiation of broad-based United Nations inter-organization partnerships, including as a founding member of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict (which now involves 12 United Nations organizations); its leadership of the 17-member United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality; and as co-chair, with UNDP, of the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Programming Policy; as well as its management of the

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (which involves more than 20 United Nations organizations and civil society experts in deciding on annual grants to innovative government and NGO programmes).

44. UNIFEM most frequently works together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, including on programming related to ending violence against women, gender-responsive budgeting and enhancing women's political participation. UNIFEM is implementing a component of the World Bank Gender Action Plan by supporting a three-year programme on enhancing women's economic empowerment through results-based initiatives in Egypt, Kenya, Liberia, the Mekong region and Peru.

D. Goal 4
Management and administration of financial and human resources aligned with commitment to excellence, empowerment and rights

45. UNIFEM and UNDP made good progress during the period of the multi-year funding framework on updating the operational guidelines that underpin their relationship to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in financial and human resources management. A series of specific delegations of authority from the UNDP Administrator to the UNIFEM Executive Director allows UNIFEM to assume greater authority and responsibility in matters relating to human resources, financial administration, and acquisition and management of property (assets) and services. In 2007, those delegations of authority contributed to the establishment of a UNIFEM human resources centre and enhanced capacity of UNIFEM to achieve greater efficiency through Atlas. Wider and more effective use of Atlas has strengthened the absorptive capacity of UNIFEM, enabling it to administer the growing scale and complexity of its operations as its resource base expands and becomes more diversified. In 2007 UNIFEM finalized a risk assessment model, including measures to streamline and simplify operations, and began to roll out a decentralization plan, delegating greater authority to subregional offices.

E. Goal 5
Larger, more diversified and more reliable resource base supports capacity of UNIFEM to meet opportunities and commitments

46. Growth in UNIFEM resources over the period of the multi-year funding framework was robust. Total regular resources nearly doubled, from $23 million in 2004 to approximately $44 million in 2007. Total contributions to UNIFEM doubled between 2006 and 2007, reaching $115 million, compared with a total income of $57.6 million in 2006. UNIFEM exceeded its multi-year funding framework target for regular resources in 2007, reaching $44 million (the projected was $40 million). A total of 54 bilateral donors contributed to UNIFEM regular resources, compared to 48 in 2006. Key donors increased contributions to regular resources substantially, including Norway, to $8.8 million, and Spain, to $8 million. Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America were the largest overall contributors to UNIFEM. While UNIFEM made good progress on enlarging and diversifying its resource base, the challenge remains to secure a larger resource base that is commensurate with women's needs

and the UNIFEM mandate. Also needed are more predictable, multi-year commitments from a larger number of donors, particularly for its regular resources.

Challenges and lessons learned

47. As a key input into the preparation of the strategic plan, 2008-2011, UNIFEM completed an external evaluation to assess implementation of the multi-year funding framework in 2007. The evaluation offered useful insights into the gains and gaps in its performance, as well as the extent of usefulness of the multi-year funding framework as a guiding framework for programming. While the findings are too numerous to include here, highlights include the following:

Catalytic role of UNIFEM

48. The evaluation highlighted the numerous ways in which UNIFEM has influenced change processes in a catalytic manner. It recommended that the notion of UNIFEM as a catalyst needs to be clarified further and utilized more systematically to become a meaningful and relevant concept, including in relation to replication and scaling up as "second degree" catalytic effects. In its new strategic plan, UNIFEM is systematically identifying which activities and programmes conform to an agreed definition of a catalytic initiative, assessing how catalytic initiatives stimulate action on replication and scaling up.

Coverage

49. The multi-year funding framework evaluation noted widespread agreement among consulted partners that UNIFEM has been able to achieve remarkable results with very limited resources. The only frequently stated criticisms were insufficient presence, insufficient funds and running the danger of "spreading itself too thin" in trying to meet the large existing demands. In the strategic plan, 2008-2011, UNIFEM will build a stable, strategic, cost-effective and relevant subregional presence to support catalytic programming and South-South exchange, as well as high-quality technical advice and quality assurance on gender equality, including in United Nations regional and subregional hubs.

V. Recommendations

50. **The UNIFEM Consultative Committee, which is comprised of five Member States (Estonia, Chile, the Republic of Korea, Norway and the Sudan) appointed by the President of the General Assembly, provides key recommendations to the organization each year. At its forty-eighth session on 13 and 14 February 2008, during which it reviewed the work of the Fund in 2007, the Committee made the following recommendations:**

The Committee expressed great appreciation to the Executive Director, ad interim, and the staff of UNIFEM for their work in the past year and made the following recommendations, designed to enhance the Fund's programming and organizational effectiveness.

The UNIFEM Consultative Committee:

1. *Emphasizes* that UNIFEM is an essential component of the United Nations gender architecture and in this respect *recommends* that UNIFEM

continue to be actively involved in the processes leading to a stronger and more coherent United Nations architecture for gender equality and women's empowerment;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the successful implementation of the UNIFEM multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007 and *welcomes* decision 2007/35 of the Executive Board, which endorsed the strategic priorities of the UNIFEM strategic plan, 2008-2011;

3. *Requests* UNIFEM to report to the Consultative Committee annually on the strategic plan, 2008-2011, tracking progress according to the key results and indicators, including how it has utilized the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as a basis for programming, and *commends* ongoing efforts to ensure complementarity in the implementation of the strategic plans of UNIFEM, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF;

4. *Takes note of* the findings of the multi-year funding framework evaluation conducted in 2007, and *encourages* UNIFEM to continue to act on its recommendations in the course of the implementation of its strategic plan, including the strengthening of its results tracking systems for annual reporting to more accurately reflect UNIFEM's specific role as an agent of change;

5. *Welcomes* UNIFEM's active participation in the One UN pilots to ensure that a gender perspective is fully integrated, and *encourages* its continued involvement in and contribution to the One UN delivery initiatives;

6. *Encourages* UNIFEM to continue to cooperate with all relevant United Nations entities to further promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and *continues to believe* that UNIFEM should be invited to and participate on a regular basis in all high-level United Nations inter-departmental/inter-agency committees, bodies and meetings, and *recommends* specifically that the gender equality perspective be adequately reflected in the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;

7. *Stresses* the importance of UNIFEM's input into the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, and *encourages* UNIFEM to actively participate in the follow-up to the outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women, as appropriate;

8. *Welcomes* UNIFEM's work as the co-chair of the United Nations Development Group Working Group on Programming Policy and the Chair of the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, and *encourages* UNIFEM to continue to contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations country teams' coordinated support to countries to advance gender equality and women's empowerment;

9. *Encourages* UNIFEM to continue its work in supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security;

10. *Encourages* UNIFEM to make substantive input into the Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Ghana, September 2008;

11. *Underlines* the importance of a strong gender equality perspective in the review of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, and encourages UNIFEM to continue to play an active role in the financing for development process, including the process leading to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha in December 2008, in particular by sharing best practices and lessons learned;

12. *Encourages* UNIFEM to strengthen its work in support of gender responsive budgeting;

13. *Further encourages* UNIFEM to continue cooperating with relevant regional organizations and looks forward to the first report of the assessment of this collaboration at its next annual session;

14. *Welcomes* the work of the UNIFEM Goodwill Ambassadors, and *takes note with appreciation* of the positive impact of their activities;

15. *Welcomes* General Assembly resolution 62/135 on UNIFEM and encourages UNIFEM to proceed with the implementation of its paragraph 10 regarding the designation of Fund representatives.

16. *Recalls* paragraph 6 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 39/125, establishing UNIFEM, regarding the role of the Consultative Committee in the appointment of the Executive Director of UNIFEM, and *looks forward* to the appointment of the next Executive Director;

17. *Commends* UNIFEM for having surpassed the projections identified for resource mobilization in the multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007 and the expansion of its partnerships with bilateral donors, civil society and private sector partners in the multi-year funding framework period, and *encourages* the Fund to continue to broaden its donor base and to seek stronger partnerships in order to meet resource mobilization targets in its strategic plan, 2008-2011;

18. *Approves* the UNIFEM request to invest in excess of $1 million in regular resources to strengthen its evaluation function at headquarters and in subregional offices;

19. *Decides* to discuss criteria for resource allocation at its next annual meeting, based on a review of relevant information provided by UNIFEM;

20. *Invites* UNIFEM to review the format of reporting on resource mobilization especially with regard to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women;

21. *Acknowledges* the work of UNIFEM as manager of the United Nations Trust Fund, and *emphasizes* that it is important that the United Nations Trust Fund retain its open nature and competitive process for selecting grantees based on the review of their proposals for innovative and practical efforts to address the multiple manifestations of violence against women;

22. *Recommends* that, in order to enable the United Nations Trust Fund to make larger and more long-term grants, as well as to potentially attract more donors, United Nations country teams are to be eligible for grants through joint proposals to fund their work with Governments and non-governmental organizations on a test-case basis, to be reviewed in 2009 based on assessing

how the involvement of the country teams enhances the effectiveness of the United Nations Trust Fund operations;

23. *Recommends* that, in order to more systematically extract lessons and share knowledge from the work of the United Nations Trust Fund grantees and the broader field of programming to end violence against women, UNIFEM invest a greater proportion of the Trust Fund resources in evaluation, knowledge management and adequate Trust Fund staffing arrangements at the global and regional levels;

24. *Decides* to convene intersessional meetings in 2008 as needed.

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New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

New Partnership for Africa's Development: sixth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/179 of 19 December 2007, assesses progress achieved in implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development and support provided by the international community. Its issuance coincides with renewed attention to Africa's development needs as evidenced also by the publication of the other major report of the Secretary-General, on "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward", and the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group. International conferences that will place a considerable focus on Africa are currently being organized. These include the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the theme: "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward"; the high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals; the Third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra; and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. This attention reflects the fact that most African countries remain off-track with respect to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

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Within the current context of the global economic slowdown, and high food and oil prices, turning vision into concrete results through the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals requires firm resolution and clear leadership from both African countries and the international development partners. In particular, while the report acknowledges that African countries have made progress in implementing New Partnership sectoral priorities, it calls at the same time for urgent action to mitigate the socio-economic impact of increasingly high food prices, through the launching of an African green revolution within the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. Those countries should also allocate more resources towards New Partnership priorities and adopt appropriate reforms to further encourage private sector participation in Partnership projects and promote public-private partnerships for the financing of infrastructure projects.

While efforts have been made to reduce the debt burden of many African countries, development partners should scale up development aid and improve aid effectiveness so as to ensure that commitments are achieved within the set deadline. The above-mentioned summits could provide the appropriate platform from which to call for urgent implementation of international commitments, including a reverse in the decline of development assistance and the long-overdue successful outcome of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations encompassing a development dimension.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/179 of 19 December 2007, entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of that resolution to the Assembly at its sixty-third session. The present report responds to that request.

2. The report highlights policy measures taken by African countries and organizations in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/57/304, annex), the response of the development partners and the support of the United Nations system during the past year. The activities undertaken by the private sector and civil society in support of NEPAD are also highlighted. The report benefited from information and data provided by Member States, regional organizations, especially the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the NEPAD secretariat, the African Peer Review Mechanism secretariat, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and various entities of the United Nations system. It also draws from the work of the MDG Africa Steering Group[1] and the report of the Secretary-General on Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward (A/63/130).

II. Action taken by African countries and organizations

3. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is both a vision and a policy framework for Africa in the twenty-first century. Its main objective is to promote socio-economic development and encourage policy measures and reforms. NEPAD provides unique opportunities for African countries to take full control of their development agenda, working more closely together, and cooperating more effectively with the international community. In this context, NEPAD is dependent on anchors at successive levels: national, regional, continent-wide and global. NEPAD cannot be operational at the top two levels unless it is implemented at the national level. This is especially important in the priority areas of infrastructure development, building human capacity and achieving good governance.

A. Infrastructure

4. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of the NEPAD Short-term Action Plan infrastructure projects, as well as the Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework, in all the four sectors despite human resource and funding constraints. In December 2007, the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa facilitated a meeting of financiers for the transport sector. In 2007, commitments by Consortium members to infrastructure in Africa were estimated at about US$ 10 billion, a significant increase of 20 per cent from the US$ 7.7 billion committed in 2006. Multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank, have collectively increased their support to the

[1] The recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group were endorsed by the States members of the African Union at the Union summit held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, 30 June-1 July 2008.

sector. At the bilateral level, there has been considerable increase in funding from France, Japan and the United States of America.

5. In the water sector, the transboundary water resources management and development programme plans initially focused on 10 river basins in Africa: Congo, Lake Chad, Lake Victoria/Kagera, Niger, Nile, Okavango, Orange/Senqu, Senegal, Volta and Zambezi. Following the establishment of the Africa Water Facility (AWF), €60 million was pledged by donors; however, by the end of 2006, only €19 million had been disbursed. In an effort to attract potential investors and donors for the financing of the necessary studies and implementation of the Inga hydroelectric power-generating project, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo organized an international round table in October 2006. In follow-up to the round table, the African Development Bank recently approved $450 million for the study of Inga including Grand Inga and Inga III.

6. The priority of the NEPAD information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure programme for Africa is to ensure that all African countries are connected to a broadband fibre-optic cable system that will in turn link them to world-wide telecommunication networks by submarine cable systems. The NEPAD e-Africa Commission is working to achieve this priority objective by coordinating the development of two regional networks covering Angola, Botswana, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Kigali protocol on the NEPAD ICT broadband infrastructure network, including the submarine network, came into force on 13 February 2008 after ratification by more than half of the signatory countries. It is estimated that the submarine network (Uhurunet) will cost US$ 1.4 billion. This will be developed by Bahariсom, a joint venture between a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) created under the Kigali protocol comprising small telecom operators, and large African Telco and non-Telco investors; and international investors. It incorporates the open-access principle and does not give preferential treatment to any country, big or small, coastal or landlocked. Open access will reduce costs of telecommunications and eventually narrow the digital divide and contribute to social and economic growth across the continent.

7. Progress was also made in addressing critical overarching issues with the objective of: (a) improving availability and accessibility of information on the status of the NEPAD infrastructure programme, with a view to facilitating greater private sector participation in financing infrastructure projects; (b) building strategic partnerships with key donors such as the European Union (EU) aimed at scaling up investment in infrastructure and improving the capacity of regional institutions to implement the NEPAD infrastructure programme; (c) developing the Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework as well as undertaking the Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic Study for infrastructure development in Africa; and (d) improving coordination mechanisms for all African institutions involved in the development of infrastructure on the continent under the leadership of the African Union.

B. Agriculture

8. During 2007-2008, progress has been made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The African Union Commission, the NEPAD secretariat and the regional economic communities strengthened their coordination in support of the implementation of the Agriculture Development Programme. During a meeting in September 2007, the three institutions made progress in delineating core responsibilities within an overall framework for joint responsibility in coordinating CAADP implementation at country and regional levels. Also, the African Union Commission and the NEPAD secretariat have made progress towards building a complementary and integrated joint Commission-NEPAD work programme. Major areas of cooperation have included co-organizing the CAADP implementation and review forum to review and share lessons on CAADP implementation.

9. In the second half of 2007, NEPAD intensified country-level engagement through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme country round-table processes. The NEPAD secretariat, in cooperation with regional economic communities, supported countries in incorporating the CAADP agenda into their agriculture and rural development programmes in order to fast-track implementation. NEPAD support to country round-table activities focused on ensuring that countries had access to expert knowledge and resources for CAADP implementation. This included support in the development of inter-ministerial and intersectoral partnerships for resource mobilization. In this context, through the support of the TerrAfrica partnership, NEPAD mobilized US$ 150 million under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Strategic Investment Programme for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa (SIP). This resulted in an additional US$ 1 billion in leveraged funds to support the scaling up of sustainable land and water management practices. To enhance support for the scaling up of sustainable land and water management (SLWM), a regional project of US$ 5 million was developed for the NEPAD secretariat, regional economic communities and CAADP pillar institutions for institutional and capacity development.

10. By collaborating with major development organizations, the NEPAD secretariat has facilitated the alignment of development partner agriculture programme design and funding to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. Major outcomes have included the alignment of the World Bank agriculture strategy for Africa with CAADP pillars, the European Commission's strategy paper on "Advancing African agriculture", a re-emphasis on agriculture by Sweden and the United States Initiative to End Hunger in Africa. Pursuant to the decisions of the 2006 Africa Fertilizer Summit held in Abuja, the NEPAD secretariat, in collaboration with the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank, established the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism. The Government of Nigeria, the Gates Foundation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other donors have already pledged over US$ 35.2 million. With the contributions of development partners, the newly established CAADP Multi-donor Trust Fund is expected to be launched in October 2008 with an estimated US$ 50 million commitment. The fund has been created to finance the implementation of CAADP, with support to regional economic communities, CAADP pillar institutions, the NEPAD secretariat, the African Union

Commission and individual countries for the conduct of activities to strengthen the development of country round tables and investment programmes.

11. The current rise in world food prices is severely affecting Africa. Through the CAADP framework, the African Union and the NEPAD secretariat convened a workshop in May 2008 composed of African Governments, development partners, regional economic communities, non-governmental organizations, farmer associations and research institutions. The African Union and NEPAD encouraged countries to honour their commitments to the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa target of allocating 10 per cent of their national budgets to agricultural and rural development and also invited development partners to honour their pledges and commitments to support agriculture sector development. A task force led by the African Union and the NEPAD secretariat and supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank and regional economic communities will coordinate timely follow-up to the decisions taken at the workshop.

C. Health

12. In South Africa in June 2007, African Governments adopted the Africa Health Strategy: 2007-2015 which articulates the kind of health systems interventions that are required. It is imperative that these strategies, as the vehicle for providing health delivery programmes, be supported. The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation has agreed to support the development of learning and demonstration health districts and has pledged to invest US$ 100 million over the next five years.

13. The human resources crisis was addressed by a high-level inter-ministerial meeting of education, finance, health and public service ministries held in Botswana in May 2007. The Conference of African Ministers of Health welcomed the recommendations arising from the meeting, including a set of actions that participants agreed to, including strengthening performance and deployment of health workers, tackling migration, financing for an expanded and sustainable health workforce, and partnership in support of human resources for health.

14. In order to address the crisis in the African health workforce, the NEPAD secretariat offers annual courses for district health managers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries directed towards strengthening mid-level management capacity. The NEPAD secretariat has also begun to collaborate with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in an effort to become more responsive to African priorities and inputs. Further, the NEPAD secretariat has continued to offer its support for the development of African centres of excellence and networking, which has included working with the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance (SAHARA). These organizations all focus strongly on capacity-building in Africa. Furthermore, in June 2007, in an effort to facilitate the emergence of an African platform on human resources for health, NEPAD co-hosted a consultation with the Earth Institute and the Global Health Workforce Alliance to plan the way forward in the development of community health workforces.

D. Education and training

15. In 2007-2008, progress has been made in the implementation of various education projects in a number of countries within the context of regional economic communities. SADC has completed baseline studies on the "Teacher development through distance learning" project in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Implementation has started in Angola. Negotiations are under way with the African Capacity Building Foundation to conduct baseline studies in five countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), namely, Benin, Ghana, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, for the implementation of the "Open and distance learning and teacher development" project.

16. Good progress is being made in the partnership project involving a number of universities in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, which do not offer nursing and midwifery at the postgraduate level, and a consortium of South African universities that have such programmes. The curriculum and areas of specialization that have been approved include maternal and child health nursing, community health nursing, research, the role of the clinical nurse specialist, and HIV and AIDS management. Negotiations for the implementation of partnership projects are taking place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Niger and Rwanda.

17. Research is under way on the identification of regional centres of excellence in education, supported by a grant from the Development Bank of Southern Africa. Once they are identified, these centres are expected to foster Pan-African cooperation in research. They will focus on research and development, bringing together existing skills and resources to enable participants to work collaboratively across national borders and disciplinary areas on major long-term projects designed to meet Africa's needs.

18. Negotiations took place in May 2008 with the Government of Gabon to host a centre for mathematics, science and technology education for member countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). This centre will train teachers in mathematics, science and technology. It will also be a regional innovator for curriculum development and research, and a regional and international organizer of conferences, seminars, symposiums and workshops, as well as a reference centre for consultative services.

19. The holding of a national conference on education and culture in South Africa is planned for the second half of 2008, as part of the preparatory process for a continental conference on education and culture scheduled for 2009. This is in pursuance of a decision taken at the sixth African Union Summit held in the Sudan in 2006, affirming that, in order for Africa's development to thrive, education needed to be at the centre of the continent's development agenda. This decision was also endorsed at the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (Maputo, 4-8 September 2006) at which the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) was launched.

E. Environment

20. The NEPAD capacity-building programme has completed subregional environment action plans with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF). UNEP and the Global Environment Facility had provided technical and financial support to regional economic communities for the development of the action plans for all the subregions in Africa. Five ministerial meetings were organized in Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern and West Africa at which ministers had adopted the subregional action plans. These plans were formerly adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its twelfth ordinary session held in South Africa in June 2008. These subregional action plans will promote regional cooperation in policy development and planning for environment and natural resource management.

21. The NEPAD secretariat, with support from the UNEP Regional Office for Africa and the Government of Norway, has provided assistance to five pilot countries (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mozambique) in developing their national action plans. These pilot projects will provide key lessons for further implementation of the Action Plan for the Environment initiative of NEPAD in other countries. Through collaboration with UNEP, NEPAD provided support to the regional economic communities in support of the implementation of the flagship programmes of the environment action plans; the environment protocol for SADC; and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership.

22. Progress has been made in the implementation of the Africa Stockpiles Programme, one of the priority projects of the NEPAD Environment Initiative Action Plan, with the NEPAD secretariat being in charge of coordination and constituting a strategic partner in implementation. Through the support of the World Bank, FAO and CropLife International, among other partners, the pilot countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania) are implementing country programmes, including developing management frameworks for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.[2]

F. Information and communications technology (ICT)

23. In the past year, progress has been made towards accelerating the implementation of various components of NEPAD e-Schools, including recent developments in the NEPAD e-Schools Demonstration Project (Demo) and the NEPAD e-Schools Business Plan.

24. The Demo is a learning platform, based on real-life experiences in respect of implementing ICT in schools, that serves to inform the roll-out of the broader initiative. To date, 19 African countries (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda) have signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding with the NEPAD e-Africa Commission and consortia (two consortia per country, composed of companies specializing in the

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2256, No. 40214.

different fields of ICT in education). The partnership model involves five consortia led by Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), Cisco, HP, Microsoft and Oracle and involving more than 50 private sector companies which are funding the Demo. With the recent launch of the Demo in Mali and Mauritius, nine countries, namely, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, have officially launched the project.

25. The NEPAD e-Schools Business Plan has been completed. It involved consultations with experts nominated by participating governments and the regional economic communities, the African Development Bank, the five consortia leaders and civil society organizations. The plan outlines inputs and projected costs of implementing the initiative. A country analysis is provided, identifying the context of each country, country strategies, priority activities, and cost estimates for integrating ICT into the education plan of the country. The final draft was discussed and endorsed at the "NEPAD e-Schools stakeholders conference" held in South Africa in April 2008.

26. In order to demonstrate their commitment to the NEPAD e-Schools Initiative, African countries, during the NEPAD e-Schools stakeholders Conference, adopted resolutions and agreed to develop and review national ICT education policies and plans in harmony with the principles of the NEPAD e-Schools Initiative. They also agreed to collaborate with the NEPAD e-Africa Commission in the development and dissemination of ICT-in-education standards and best practices. Furthermore, they decided to develop national NEPAD e-Schools business plans in broad agreement with the NEPAD e-Schools Business Plan. They decided to create national implementing agencies to facilitate the roll-out of the schools by 2009 and achieve the goal of transforming 50 per cent of their secondary schools into NEPAD e-Schools by 2015.

G. Science and technology

27. Progress was made in implementing the programmes of Africa's Consolidated Science and Technology Plan of Action: African Biosciences Initiative; and in establishing a high-level African panel on biotechnology, the African Water Sciences and Technology Network, the African Energy Research and Innovation (AERI) Network, and the African Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators (ASTII) initiative.

28. The African Biosciences Initiative is implemented through four regional networks of laboratories and technoparks that are involved in carrying out cutting-edge research and development and in transferring biosciences technologies to other laboratories. The Southern African Network for Biosciences focused on validating treatment remedies for opportunistic infections affecting people living with HIV/AIDS, while the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa Network focused on the development of biotechnological tools to control bacterial disease in bananas. Further, the West African Biosciences Network engaged in inventory and characterization of sorghum genetic resources, while the North African Biosciences Network concentrated on the production of elite biofortified Northern African barley genotypes.

29. In response to the recommendations of the High-level African Panel on Modern Biotechnology, the NEPAD secretariat has established a (pan-) African

Biosafety Network of Expertise, whose work will complement ongoing activities under the African Biosciences Initiative so that technological innovation will go hand in hand with ensuring the safety of humans and the environment. In the area under the aegis of the African Water Sciences and Technology Network, the NEPAD secretariat, with a grant from the Government of France, subcontracted the Water Research Commission of South Africa to provide technical expertise in the preparation of a business plan and the identification of centres that will constitute the proposed network.

30. With financial support from the Government of South Africa, the NEPAD secretariat commissioned the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to prepare a draft business plan. The draft was revised and adopted by the third ordinary session of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology, held in Kenya in November 2007. In addition, the NEPAD secretariat has initiated discussions with potential donors with respect to financing the establishment of the proposed African Energy Research and Innovation Network and its projects.[3]

31. In the area of African science, technology and innovation indicators, with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the NEPAD Office of Science and Technology is implementing the African Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators Initiative programme. A series of memorandums of understanding and agreements were signed in order to advance the development and implementation of the initiative. The NEPAD secretariat was granted observer status in the meetings of the OECD Working Party of National Experts on Sciences and Technology Indicators (NESTI). In September 2007, an intergovernmental committee on the African Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators Initiative adopted a series of studies and survey guidelines that will underpin the conduct of surveys in the participating countries. A number of countries (Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) have committed resources for participation in the science, technology and innovation pilot surveys.

H. Gender mainstreaming and civil society involvement

32. Following a meeting in South Africa in October 2007, the NEPAD Gender Task Force recommended a number of changes to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). These recommendations followed gender analysis of African Peer Review Mechanism country reports, namely, those of Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa. In particular, the Gender Task Force proposed that APRM reports should cover the following four elements: (a) implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; (b) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women[4] and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); (c) components on the financial support for the implementation of gender

[3] Discussions have been held with the United Nations University (UNU), Irish Aid and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) with regard to providing technical and financial support to the initiative.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

issues through micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises; and (d) progress made on achieving a proportionate representation of women in parliament.

33. The NEPAD secretariat and the Government of Spain, through the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), entered into a cooperation agreement to support the Spain-NEPAD Fund for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa. The fund aims to empower African women with the financial resources needed to unlock their economic potential, fight poverty, create wealth and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, economic growth and sustainable development. The objectives of the fund include: (a) mobilizing financial resources for women entrepreneurs; (b) providing a platform for sharing experiences arising from the economic empowerment of women; and (c) facilitating linkages between women entrepreneurs both nationally and internationally.

I. African Peer Review Mechanism

34. Progress in moving forward the African Peer Review Mechanism process was made in 2007-2008. The accession of Djibouti in July 2007, of Mauritania in January 2008 and of Togo in June 2008 brings to 29 the total number of African countries that have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism. Twenty-six countries had previously voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism, namely, Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

35. Of the 29 countries that acceded to the Mechanism, 14 have established their national structures and are at various stages of implementing the APRM process, which ranges from conducting self-assessment and receiving country support missions and country review missions to implementing their national programme of action. Benin completed the process, and the country review report was submitted to the Africa Peer Review Forum in January 2008. The country review reports of Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Uganda were submitted to the ninth summit of the Africa Peer Review Forum held in Egypt in June 2008, but only the country report of Uganda was peer-reviewed. Thus, as of the end of June 2008, seven countries had been peer-reviewed, namely, Algeria, Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda.

36. In order to streamline and fast-track the APRM process, a workshop was held in Algeria in November 2007. As part of the preparation process for the workshop, the APRM secretariat had organized, in October 2007, an expert working session to review the APRM methodology and processes. Technical experts from countries that had reached an advanced stage in the self-assessment processes, independent experts who were engaged in the APRM, and strategic partners, including the African Development Bank, ECA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), participated in the working session. The expert working session made proposals aimed at shortening and standardizing the APRM process without losing the essential elements. It also identified priority issues based on lessons learned and made suggestions on actions to facilitate the implementation of the

recommendations of the sixth Africa Governance Forum held in Rwanda in May 2006.

37. The Algeria workshop conducted a review of the experience achieved by the countries that had been peer-reviewed and by those that had reached an advanced stage in the process. By considering the APRM methodology from inception to the completion point, the workshop made recommendations on the national APRM structures, as well as concrete proposals on revising the APRM questionnaire and designing a prototype research framework for review. The workshop also made recommendations aimed at improving post-review monitoring and evaluation activities.

III. Response of the international community: building on the momentum of international support for Africa's development

38. Through the NEPAD programme, African countries have created an effective leadership process for engaging development partners on issues of concern to the continent, such as international trade arrangements, equitable access of African products to international markets, debt relief, and official development assistance (ODA) reforms. The increased engagement by African Governments with OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries and new and emerging donors has put the continent and its development agenda high on the priority list of numerous international summits.

39. At the 2008 Hokkaido Summit, the Group of Eight countries (G8) renewed their commitments made at the Gleneagles Summit, and reaffirmed at Heiligendamm (2007), including increasing ODA to Africa by US$ 25 billion per year by 2010. The 2008 G8 Summit endorsed a five-year time frame for providing US$ 60 billion to fight infectious diseases and strengthen health systems.

40. At the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) (see A/62/859), held in Yokohama, Japan, from 28 to 30 May 2008, Japan pledged to increase aid to Africa to US$ 1.9 billion by 2010. It also plans to offer US$ 4 billion in concessional loans to assist Africa in developing infrastructure and agriculture, and to double grants and technical cooperation.

41. In December 2007, at the second European Union-Africa Summit in Lisbon, the two continents strengthened their partnership by adopting a Joint Africa-EU strategy comprising a common strategic vision and road map, endorsed by all EU and African States as well as by both the European Commission and the African Union. EU and African countries also adopted an action plan outlining eight sectors: "Africa-EU partnerships on peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; trade and regional integration; the Millennium Development Goals; energy; climate change; migration, mobility and employment; and science, research and space.

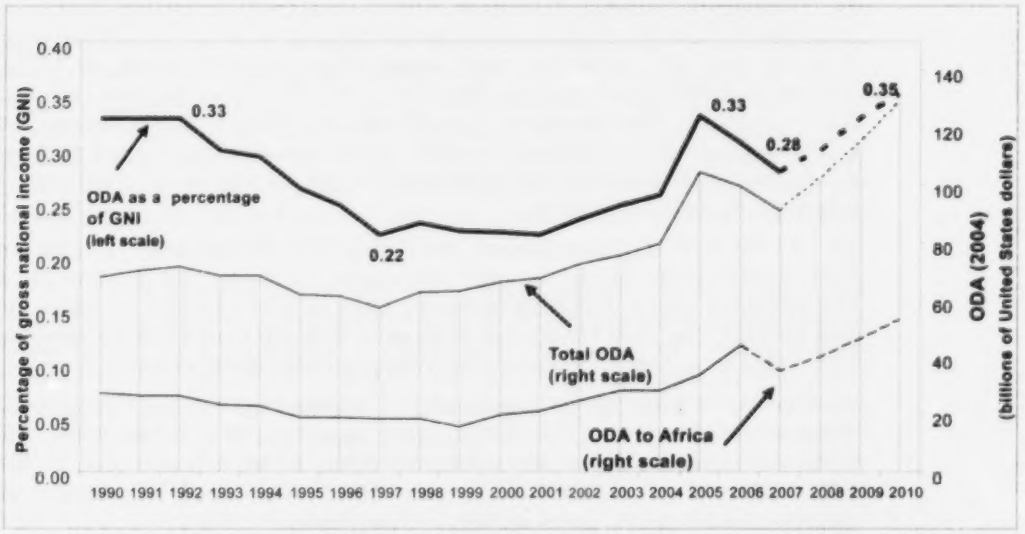
42. Despite renewed interest in Africa's development issues, and three years after the G8 Gleneagles Summit, where major commitments had been made, the report of the Secretary-General on Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward (A/63/130), as well as the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group, have urged the international

community to recommit to Africa's development goals and to redouble efforts to achieve them. In the context of declining aid to Africa, according to the MDG Africa Steering Group, external finance for development in Africa needs to rise to US$ 72 billion per year to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

A. Official development assistance

43. According to preliminary data from OECD, global ODA by its member countries declined by 8.4 per cent in real terms in 2007, representing a drop from 0.31 per cent of members' combined gross national income (GNI) in 2006 (US$ 104.4 billion) to 0.28 per cent in 2007 (US$ 103.7 billion) (see figure).

Net official development assistance (ODA) from members of the Development Assistance Committee, 1990-2007, and DAC secretariat simulations, 2008-2010



Source: OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2008.

44. Against this background, net ODA to Africa had increased from US$ 22 billion in 2001 to US$ 29 billion in 2004. Also, the years 2005 and 2006 witnessed an increase of ODA for Africa which was mostly due to debt relief to Nigeria. However, OECD preliminary estimates indicate that ODA to Africa had dropped from US$ 44 billion in 2006 to US$ 35 billion in 2007, representing a decrease of 20.5 per cent. This drop in ODA was due mainly to the phasing out of debt relief. In this context, ODA to Africa is still short of the international community's 2005 pledges to double aid by 2010 by US$ 25 billion. Although some DAC donors have made concrete plans for reallocating aid to Africa, many others still fall short of their targets.

45. The quality of aid is as important as the quantity. Aid volatility is still a serious problem in Africa. The main objective of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness has been to streamline the aid effort and make development cooperation more effective. Early indications on how donors and partners are implementing the Paris Declaration are mixed. The World Bank's December 2007 review, entitled "Results-based national development strategies: assessment and challenges ahead", indicates progress towards better-quality national development strategies and better results-monitoring frameworks, but challenges remain in respect of the link between national development strategies and the budget in most countries, the need to deepen the ownership of partner countries, and the need for country systems to be strengthened by moving away from poor aid practices, as exemplified by donor-driven parallel implementation units.

46. The Third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra in September 2008 will provide a good opportunity for an assessment of progress. Addressing these challenges and ensuring that donors integrate their support within country-led programmes will facilitate the role of partner countries in strengthening capacity development. Furthermore, agreement is expected on accelerating progress on aid predictability and other aid management issues that affect the ability to increase the rate of growth of ODA in support of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

47. The global aid landscape is changing dynamically in terms of the ways in which aid is financed and delivered. The new aid architecture is marked by the emergence of global funds, and non-traditional bilateral donors, private foundations, non-governmental organizations and corporations. These new actors are expanding the availability of resources for African countries and exploring innovative ways to address pressing development needs. However, development actors are now facing new challenges for aid effectiveness concerning, for example, how to effectively collaborate with the new players in the overall framework of aid effectiveness and how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of aid through better aid delivery.[5]

B. Debt relief

48. The past year saw continued progress in multilateral and bilateral debt relief and cancellation efforts within the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI).

49. The Gambia reached the completion point under the HIPC Initiative in December 2007. Thus, as of June 2008, 19 African countries — Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia — had reached the completion point under the HIPC Initiative and, therefore, had also benefited from debt relief through the MDRI.

50. Two African countries reached the HIPC decision point within the last 12 months: the Central African Republic in September 2007 and Liberia in March 2008. Thus, by the end of June 2008, eight African countries — Burundi, the Central

[5] See World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2008: MDGs and the Environment: Agenda for Inclusive and Sustainable Development* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2008).

African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia[6] — had reached the HIPC decision point and were receiving interim debt relief. Once these countries reach the completion point under the HIPC Initiative, they will also automatically qualify for MDRI debt relief. Six more African countries — the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Somalia, the Sudan and Togo — have met the income and indebtedness criteria for HIPC but have not yet reached the HIPC decision point.

51. Further, in June 2008, the Paris Club creditors agreed to alleviate the external public debt of Togo, following the approval by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of a new three-year arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility in April 2008. This agreement will lead to the immediate cancellation of US$ 347 million.

52. As a result of debt-relief initiatives, recent years have seen a significant improvement in the external debt situation of African countries, especially after the launch of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative in 2005. While in the pre-Monterrey period (1998-2001) the total external debt of Africa, on an average annual basis, had been US$ 274 billion, in the post-Monterrey period (2002-2005) it increased to US$ 293 billion, fell to US$ 244 billion in 2006 and is estimated to have fallen further to US$ 243 billion in 2007. African countries have also seen an improvement in debt sustainability indicators: total debt as a percentage of exports of goods and services had declined from 212 per cent in the pre-Monterrey period to 142 per cent in the post-Monterrey period. In 2006, it had declined to 69 per cent and is estimated to have declined further to 65 per cent in 2007. At the same time, total debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) had declined from 62.4 per cent in the pre-Monterrey period to 47.9 per cent in the post-Monterrey period. In 2006, it reached 26.2 per cent and is estimated to have declined further, to 23.1 per cent, in 2007 (see table).

Africa's external debt profile, 1998-2007

Africa	*Pre-Monterrey (1998-2001)*	*Post-Monterrey/ pre-MDRI (2002-2005)*	*2006*	*2007*[a]
Total debt (billions of United States dollars)	274.3	293.3	244.1	243.2
Total debt (percentage of total exports)	212	142	69	65
Total debt (percentage of GDP)	62.4	47.9	26.2	23.1

Source: Economic Commission for Africa and African Union, *Economic Report on Africa 2008: Africa and the Monterrey Consensus: Tracking Performance and Progress* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.II.K.3).

[a] Estimate.

53. Notwithstanding the encouraging progress, a number of concerns remain. Many HIPC countries are facing considerable difficulties in reaching the completion point. Most of the delays are related to their failure to stay on track with respect to

[6] Liberia has no MDRI-eligible debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but is expected to receive additional beyond-HIPC debt relief from IMF to fully cover its remaining eligible debt outstanding at the completion point.

formulating and implementing IMF-supported economic reform programmes, especially in the face of the recent increase in oil and food prices.

54. Additional financing should be mobilized to cover the projected costs of debt relief to countries with protracted arrears to multilateral financial institutions (IMF, the World Bank, the African Development Bank), since the costs for providing debt relief to such countries were not included in the original financing framework of the HIPC Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. In particular, considerable additional resources are needed for IMF to provide debt relief to the remaining two protracted-arrears countries (Somalia and the Sudan).

55. While debt relief has reduced the debt burden of beneficiary countries and expanded the fiscal space for development spending, long-term debt sustainability is still a concern for most of them. The issue of sustainability often stems from underlying vulnerabilities of these countries to exogenous shocks. Achieving debt sustainability will require strengthening public institutions, setting up sound macroeconomic frameworks, diversifying the production and export bases, increasing domestic revenue mobilization and prudent debt management. In addition, creditors, including new and emerging lenders, need to take debt sustainability into account in their lending decisions in order to help these countries avoid reaccumulating unsustainable debt burdens.

C. Foreign direct investment

56. In 2006, the year for which the most up-to-date data are available, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa rose to a new record level of US$ 36 billion, twice their 2004 level. Despite the doubling of FDI inflows, Africa's share in global inflows fell from 3.1 per cent in 2005 to 2.7 per cent in 2006.

57. In line with past trends, FDI inflows remained concentrated in a limited number of countries and industries. The top 10 recipients in Africa accounted for US$ 32 billion, which corresponded to nearly 90 per cent of the region's inflows in 2006. In each of four countries, FDI inflows were higher than US$ 3 billion, while eight countries each attracted FDI in excess of US$ 1 billion. As a result of recent increases in commodity prices, many transnational corporations expanded their activities in gas, oil and mining industries. Asian transnational corporations expanded substantially, through both greenfield and cross-border mergers and acquisitions. In particular, the value of cross-border acquisitions of African enterprises reached US$ 18 billion in 2006, almost half of which represented mergers and acquisitions by Asian transnational corporations. Cross-border mergers and acquisitions and greenfield investments were the main source of increased FDI inflows to top recipient countries, particularly Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, the Sudan and Tunisia. Even though extractive industries accounted for most of the FDI inflows to the continent as a whole, in Egypt, the top FDI recipient in 2006, 80 per cent of FDI inflows were in non-oil activities such as agriculture, manufacturing, banking and tourism.

58. The rapid increase of inflows to the continent partly reflects policy reforms undertaken by African countries to attract FDI. According to the World Bank's annual "Doing business" report for 2008, in the regional rankings on the pace of reform, Africa had fallen from third place to fifth. Despite this, Ghana and Kenya both ranked among the top 10 reformers worldwide in 2007, and made the most

significant advance among African countries in the rankings on aggregate ease of doing business.

59. The top reformers have introduced measures aimed at improving the admission and/or establishment processes applied to foreign investors. These measures include reducing tax burdens, and cutting business start-up time and costs, as well as making various registration procedures simpler and more efficient. Several countries also took measures to enhance investor protection, strengthen property rights and increase access to credit.

60. At the international level, the region's development partners under the umbrella of the fourth Africa-Asia Business Forum and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development implemented measures to boost FDI inflows to Africa. Specifically, the Forum sought to improve the expansion of investments by Asian countries, including into small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa.

D. Trade

61. Very limited progress was made in the complex Doha trade negotiations in reaching an agreement on issues affecting Africa, including agricultural market access and a greater reduction in trade-distorting agricultural subsidies. In this context, OECD countries continue their distorting agricultural support policies to the disadvantage of African farmers and agro-producers.

62. Following the establishment of the Task Force on Aid for Trade, various regional and global World Trade Organization-facilitated meetings on aid for trade were held during the fourth quarter of 2007. The purpose of these regional meetings was to promote exchange of information on best practices and to facilitate collective action. The objective of the global meetings was to highlight the need for improvements in aid for trade flows and the importance of improving performance indicators (outcomes) for donors and recipients, as well as increasing the country, regional and sector focus.

63. Owing to the establishment of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Assistance to Least Developed Countries and an executive secretariat to support its operations, some progress has been achieved in trade-related technical assistance for the least developed countries. To establish a more country-oriented mechanism, decisions are made by a new Enhanced Integrated Framework board, including voting representatives of three bilateral donors and three least developed countries. To date, over US$ 100 million has been pledged by bilateral donors to the Enhanced Integrated Framework Trust Fund.

64. Little progress was made in negotiations on economic partnership agreements between the European Union (EU) and six regional clusters of African countries. Unlike the Cotonou Agreement, economic partnership agreements will be compatible with World Trade Organization requirements. Only partial interim agreements were initialled multilaterally with the East African Community and South African clusters and bilaterally with an additional eight countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland). Framework agreements on trade and development were signed between EU and the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and SADC. As of January 2008, African countries that had already reached an agreement

on economic partnership agreements with EU would have tariff- and quota-free access to EU markets, with a transition period for sugar and rice. While the least developed African countries that have not concluded economic partnership agreements will have duty- and quota-free market access under the EU Everything but Arms Initiative, non-least developed African countries will have preferential access to EU markets under the EU Generalized System of Preferences.

E. South-South cooperation

65. Non-DAC and emerging developing partners are playing an increasing role in development cooperation, offering new and innovative ideas and approaches to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.

66. In 2007, China and Africa started to implement the follow-up actions to the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, held in November 2006. Following the launch of the China-Africa Development Fund in June 2007, over US$ 90 million has been contributed to the Fund. China actively participates in the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and cooperates with major regional financial institutions in Africa.

67. At the first India-Africa Forum Summit held in April 2008, India offered US$ 5.4 billion in financial credit over the next five years, US$ 500 million in development grants to Africa, and preferential market access for all exports from least developed countries. The framework for cooperation addresses a number of priority issues, namely, economics; political and social science; technology; research and development; development and capacity-building; tourism; infrastructure, energy and environment; and media and communication.

68. As a follow-up to the Africa-South America Summit held in Abuja in 2006, African and South American trade ministers met in June 2008 to plan a new framework for trade between the two continents. The countries are working to secure market access for goods from developing countries and are taking an active part in negotiations on the Global System of Trade Preferences (GSTP). Within the framework of a joint initiative of the African Union and the South American Community of Nations, cooperation in science and technology between African and South American States is growing in thematic areas, including agriculture and agribusiness, water resources and environment, energy, natural resources, education and information technology. A meeting is planned in 2009 to assess progress made in the implementation of the initiative.

69. Turkey-Africa trade volume had expanded from US$ 5 billion in 2003 to US$ 12 billion in 2007. As a strategic partner for Africa, Turkey became a non-regional member of the African Development Bank early in 2008 and in August 2008 will host its first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit to consider modalities for strengthening this partnership.

IV. Support by the United Nations system

70. Support by the United Nations system, ranging from advocacy and institutional support to technical assistance and capacity development, remains an

important pillar of international support for the implementation of NEPAD. The nature and scope of the support provided by the United Nations system in the past 12 months have been well documented in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations system support for NEPAD (E/AC.51/2008/5). Furthermore, the same period witnessed the launch of the MDG Africa Steering Group by the Secretary-General, as well as the progress achieved by the Millennium Villages initiative.

A. Strengthening of the Regional Consultation Mechanism of United Nations Agencies and Organizations Working in Africa in Support of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme and the cluster system

71. The period 2007-2008 has seen further progress in enhancing the support provided by the United Nations system to the African Union and its NEPAD programme. In line with the recommendations of the Seventh Regional Consultations Meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2006, ECA commissioned an external review of the cluster system under which the United Nations system support to NEPAD is organized. The recommendations of the review were taken into account at the Eighth Regional Consultations Meeting held in Addis Ababa in November 2007.

72. The Eighth Regional Consultations Meeting noted the progress in increasing the effectiveness of the Regional Consultation Mechanism in terms of enhanced leadership, including the repositioning of the Mechanism secretariat at ECA as a strategic coordinator, and increased interaction within and among clusters, as well as the sharpened focus of cluster activities for greater relevance and effectiveness. The increased participation of the African Union Commission and regional economic communities in the Regional Consultation Mechanism was highlighted as another important accomplishment.

73. The Eighth Regional Consultations Meeting reiterated the need for further commitment and leadership; increased accountability; enhanced coordination and collaboration; increased resource mobilization and capacity-building; more systematic monitoring and evaluation; and increased communication, outreach and advocacy. The meeting called for the establishment of a steering committee to oversee the activities of the Regional Consultation Mechanism. Participants also recommended further alignment of the activities of the cluster system with African Union and NEPAD priorities, within the framework of the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity-building Programme for the African Union. The Regional Consultation Mechanism called for the development by the clusters of three-year business plans and the mainstreaming in their work of cross-cutting issues such as gender, health and culture.

B. MDG Africa Steering Group

74. At the midpoint with respect to the Millennium Development Goal target date of 2015, Africa as a whole remains off-track with regard to reaching most of the Millennium Development Goals. In response to this challenge, the Secretary-General launched, in September 2007, the MDG Africa Steering Group, an

innovative partnership arrangement. For the first time, the leadership of the United Nations, the World Bank and IMF came together with the leaders of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the Islamic Development Bank and OECD to identify the practical actions needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. In June 2008, the Steering Group published its recommendations on key sectors: agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, national statistical systems and climate change, as well as on financing and aid predictability. These recommendations map out an ambitious agenda that, if fully implemented, will help replicate the growing number of development success stories across Africa at the scale needed in order for the Millennium Development Goals to be reached by 2015. These recommendations were accepted and endorsed by the African Union Summit held in Egypt in June-July 2008.

C. Millennium Villages

75. So far, 13 countries have launched Millennium Villages: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Working with over one half million people and providing approximately US$ 50 worth of support per person per year — much more than today's typical support levels in rural Africa, but well within the G8 US$ 80 per capita promise made at the Gleneagles G8 Summit — targeted investments in agriculture, health, education and infrastructure are helping poor, isolated communities make major transformations within a short period of time. The benefits of practical interventions, entailing, for example, fertilizer and improved seed, malaria bed nets for all sleeping sites, safe water points, connectivity and the Internet, are leading many Governments to promote national rural development strategies based explicitly on scaling up the lessons of the Millennium Villages.

76. Early results from the Millennium Villages in countries across Africa are proving that rapid progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals is possible when a holistic set of interventions are combined with local leadership, government support and adequate donor financing. Major successes in the Villages in the areas of food production, malaria control, and school meal programmes indicate the readiness of local communities to be crucial actors in the pursuit of national Millennium Development Goal achievement and the viability of their involvement. The affordability of the project within the boundaries of international commitments and the desire by many African Governments to apply the lessons and undertake the interventions on a broader scale signal the potential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

77. **While significant progress has been recorded in the implementation of NEPAD and the development partners have made efforts in delivering on their promise to reduce the debt burden of African countries, a number of challenges persist and need to be addressed in order to accelerate implementation. The absence of appropriate policy measures by both the international community**

and African countries will reverse the improvement in living standards of millions of African people.

78. **In the context of slower global economic growth and higher oil and food prices, modern and efficient physical infrastructure is crucial to sustaining economic growth and a productive private sector. African Governments should continue to undertake appropriate institutional reforms so as to attract private capital and develop public-private partnerships for financing infrastructure projects. For instance, in the context of South-South cooperation, Governments could attract the sovereign wealth funds of oil-producing countries to secure investment in infrastructure.**

79. **One of the remaining challenges with respect to accelerating implementation of infrastructure projects in Africa (for example, road corridors, multi-purpose water infrastructure, information and communications technology) has been identified as lack of coordination among the various key regional institutions in the continent. The NEPAD secretariat should continue to work closely with the African Union Commission and regional economic communities on infrastructure development in Africa.**

80. **Now that 7 countries have been peer-reviewed and 29 countries have joined the African Peer Review Mechanism process, it is critical that Governments implement the agreed programmes of action and recommendations of the APRM country reports, and that the review process move faster so as to accelerate the rate of completion for countries that have already launched the APRM process.**

81. **While the recent increase in food prices is threatening progress made in fighting poverty, it nonetheless offers an opportunity for African countries to increase their spending on agricultural and rural development to 10 per cent of public expenditure in line with the Maputo Declaration; to launch an African green revolution within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in order to double agriculture yields, accelerate economic growth and combat hunger. It is also an opportunity for policymakers to further promote intra-African trade and regional integration.**

82. **While the integration of the NEPAD secretariat into the structures of the African Union Commission is under way, African countries ought to support the institutional capacity of the Commission and the NEPAD secretariat by providing the necessary human and financial resources, and strengthening public awareness through a comprehensive communications strategy.**

83. **For more effective implementation of NEPAD projects, it is vital to further improve the linkages and coordination among African countries, the regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa.**

84. **In order to meet their commitment to increase aid by US$ 50 billion by 2010, with half of the increase going to Africa, G8 countries should scale up and reverse the decline in ODA disbursements in the next few years and improve the effectiveness of ODA in support of national development strategies.**

85. **Insufficient predictability in ODA makes it difficult for African policymakers to plan capital and current expenditure in key sectors including agriculture, health and education. Each individual donor country ought to reassess current disbursement procedures and provide country-by-country detailed timetables for scaling up aid in conformity with the Monterrey Consensus[7] commitment. Also, while donor countries should play a major role in addressing the food crisis, they need to commit new resources and not merely reallocate previously pledged assistance.**

86. **The combined food crisis and the deceleration in the growth of the global economy offer a window of opportunity for the international community to achieve a successful outcome regarding the development dimension of the Doha trade negotiations by removing obstacles to an open trading system in agricultural commodities, to the benefit of African countries in particular.**

87. **African Governments and development partners should formalize compacts that outline each other's roles and responsibilities so as to ensure that financing commitments are met and aligned with national systems.**

88. **As new and emerging development partners have significantly enhanced their engagement with Africa, it is crucial that both traditional and new donors formulate an innovative mechanism for coordinating their actions in the areas of aid, trade and debt sustainability. The upcoming Third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Accra will provide an opportunity to address the issues connected with the new dimensions of aid harmonization and collaboration.**

89. **Debt relief has resulted in progress in investments in health and basic education. However, the combined effects of the steep rise in oil and food prices constitute a threat to sustained levels of investment in these social sectors. In the context of effective South-South cooperation, a facility could be established whereby countries receiving windfall earnings from oil export would contribute to the most vulnerable African countries.**

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[7] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

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Operational activities for development

Implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 98 of resolution 62/208, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it on the implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review and to provide recommendations on changing the review from a three-year to a four-year cycle, in order for the Assembly to make a well-informed decision during its sixty-third session. The Assembly, in the same resolution, underscored the importance of ensuring that the strategic plans of funds and programmes were consistent with and guided by the comprehensive policy review, which established the main intergovernmentally agreed parameters of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

The report provides options with regard to changing the comprehensive policy review from a triennial to a quadrennial cycle and analyses the implications of such a change on the planning process and cycle of each of the funds and programmes covered, namely: the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme. Recommendations are provided for consideration by the General Assembly, on the basis of the analysis contained in the report.

* A/63/150.

** The delay in the submission of the present report was due to extensive consultations with the United Nations funds and programmes.

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I. Introduction

A. Mandate and context

1. In paragraph 98 of its resolution 62/208, on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly on the implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review and to provide recommendations on changing the comprehensive policy review from a three-year to a four-year cycle, in order for the Assembly to make a well-informed decision during its sixty-third session. Prefacing this request, the Assembly, in paragraph 97, underscored the importance of ensuring that the strategic plans of funds and programmes were consistent with and guided by the comprehensive policy review, which established the main intergovernmentally agreed parameters of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

2. The request can be seen as part of an overall effort to improve coherence in the functioning of the United Nations development system, based on the guidance given by Member States. The General Assembly has consistently underscored the importance of the triennial comprehensive policy review, through which it establishes key system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system.

3. Given the importance of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the operational work of the United Nations system, the strategic plans of the funds and programmes should be guided by the policy orientations contained in the review. Currently, however, the cycles of planning of the funds and programmes are not synchronized with the cycle of the review. Better alignment of the strategic planning processes of the funds and programmes with the cycle of the comprehensive policy review, thereby ensuring that the strategic plans were finalized upon the conclusion of the comprehensive policy review, would improve the conditions for the strategic plans to reflect the guidance of the review.

B. Objectives and scope of the report

4. The objective of the present report is to analyse the implications of aligning the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review, and to provide recommendations on changing the review from a three-year to a four-year cycle. The report examines two options for changing the review to a four-year cycle and for ensuring the alignment, which should help inform the deliberations of the General Assembly in this regard.

5. The analysis covers the planning activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), which are coordinated by the Economic and Social Council and whose Executive Boards report to the Council. Together, the planning activities of the four organizations account for more than 60 per cent of the expenditures on operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

6. While the analysis is confined to the above-mentioned four funds and programmes, the comprehensive policy review addresses the entire United Nations system. The question of aligning the strategic plans with the comprehensive policy review applies equally to all organizations of the system. Currently, the pattern and cycles for the planning processes differ greatly from one organization to another (see para. 15 and table 2).

II. Advantages of holding the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development on a quadrennial basis

7. There are several advantages to changing the comprehensive policy review from a three-year to a four-year cycle.

8. First, a sufficient amount of time is needed for the United Nations system to put in place the measures to implement the guidance given by the General Assembly in the comprehensive policy review. Currently, a period of only one and a half years elapses between any given triennial comprehensive policy review and the Economic and Social Council launch of preparations for the next review. Developing a system-wide plan to implement the review takes five months. The procedures and governance mechanisms of the various organizations, the process of arriving at a system-wide consensus on specific follow-up measures and the inherent difficulties of introducing and managing change tend to slow down the momentum of implementation. Holding the comprehensive policy review on a quadrennial basis would allow the United Nations system to have a more realistic time frame in which to implement the guidance provided by the General Assembly. It would also allow more time for the measures to have an impact on the functioning of the United Nations system and on the situation in programme countries.

9. Second, adopting a four-year cycle would open the possibility of synchronizing the strategic plans of the funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review so that the plans, and thus the support provided by the organizations to programme countries, could reflect the guidance from the review.

10. Third, in terms of preparations for the comprehensive policy review, a four-year cycle might allow for a midterm review of the implementation of the guidance by the General Assembly from the previous comprehensive review, which could provide a more solid basis for guiding the preparations for the next comprehensive policy review. A four-year cycle would also enable the United Nations system to have more time to prepare reports to support the review by the Assembly. The reports could provide a more comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the results of the implementation of actions, in terms of development effectiveness and efficiency, including in programme countries. The analysis could also benefit from evaluations carried out by individual organizations on the themes of the comprehensive policy review.

11. Finally, reducing the frequency of comprehensive policy reviews could generate savings for the United Nations Secretariat, regarding both regular and extrabudgetary resources, some of which could be used to strengthen other areas of the work on operational activities, such as evaluations and analytical work to be carried out in preparation for the review, or to strengthen the implementation of

paragraph 28 of General Assembly resolution 62/208, on improving statistical reporting on the financing of operational activities.

12. Overall, a four-year cycle would save time and resources. It would allow an additional year during which to focus on the process of implementation of the guidance provided by the General Assembly in operational activities for development rather than on the process of planning.

III. Current situation regarding the alignment of the strategic plans of the funds and programmes with the triennial comprehensive policy review

A. Oversight and implementation roles of the Executive Boards

13. The strategic plans of the funds and programmes constitute the main instruments by which the organizations implement their mandates and the policy guidance of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. The Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, whose functions have been defined by the Assembly in various resolutions (see General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 50/227), exercise oversight over those instruments. The Executive Boards are in effect mandated to ensure that the activities and operational strategies of each fund or programme are consistent with the overall policy guidance set forth by the Assembly and the Council. The budgeting processes of the four funds and programmes are aligned with their strategic plans.

14. UNDP and UNFPA have the same Executive Board, while UNICEF and WFP each have their own, with WFP also reporting to the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

B. Strategic planning processes of the funds and programmes

15. Currently, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP have four-year strategic planning cycles,[1] as follows:

Fund/programme	*Current cycle*	*Previous cycle*
United Nations Development Programme	2008-2011	2004-2007
United Nations Population Fund	2008-2011	2004-2007
United Nations Children's Fund	2006-2009	2002-2005
World Food Programme	2008-2011	2006-2009

16. UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF have fixed-planning cycles, while WFP has a rolling system whereby it reviews and adjusts its plan every two years. With the

[1] UNDP and UNFPA shifted from a five-year to a four-year period, starting with the 2000-2003 cycle. UNICEF shifted from a rolling plan, updated every two years, to a fixed four-year plan, starting with its 2002-2005 cycle.

exception of UNICEF, the periods covered by the current strategic plans of the other three organizations coincide in 2008-2011.

17. The WFP plan, which is rolled every two years, coincides with that of UNDP/UNFPA only every other cycle and with that of UNICEF in alternating periods.

18. Since UNDP and UNFPA have the same Executive Board, their planning processes closely coincide, especially in terms of the submission of their reports, plans and budgets to the Board.

19. The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the United Nations Volunteer Programme are separate funds created by the General Assembly and associated with UNDP. All three report to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. Of the three, only UNIFEM prepares and submits a medium-term strategic plan in the same format as UNDP and following the same cycle as UNDP. The United Nations Office for Project Services also reports to the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA.

20. At its annual Executive Board session in June, UNICEF held discussions on extending the current planning cycle by two years, to 2011. The question will be considered again at the Board session in September. If a decision is made in that regard, the next UNICEF planning cycle would cover the period 2012-2015, coinciding with the other funds and programmes.

21. The planning processes of the four organizations have evolved over time, not only as a result of their efforts to harmonize and streamline their work but also in response to policies emanating from the comprehensive policy review and evolving methods and standards for planning and management, notably with the shift to results-based management.[2] The planning processes are being refined as new features and approaches are introduced.

22. With the 2015 target date for realizing the Millennium Development Goals approaching, it will be critical for the funds and programmes to enhance efforts towards reaching the Goals, which should be reflected in their strategic plans. Alignment with the comprehensive policy review would also bolster consistency among the plans around the themes and approaches of the review.

23. The programming cycles of the funds and programmes differ from those of other entities of the United Nations system, as shown in table 1:

[2] UNDP and UNFPA shifted from a five-year to a four-year period, starting with the 2000-2003 cycle. UNICEF shifted from a rolling plan, updated every two years, to a fixed four-year plan, starting with its 2002-2005 cycle.

Table 1
Programming cycles of entities of the United Nations system

Entity	*Instrument*	*Previous cycle (Number of years)*	*Current cycle (Number of years)*	*Next cycle (Number of years)*
FAO	Medium-term plan[a]	2004-2009 (6)	2006-2011[b] (6)	To be decided
ILO	Strategic policy framework	2002-2005 (4)	2006-2009 (4)	2010-2015[c] (6)
UNAIDS	Strategic framework	2006-2007[d] (2)	2007-2011 (5)	2012-2015 (4)
UNESCO	Medium-term strategy	2002-2007 (6)	2008-2013 (6)	2014-2019 (6)
UNIDO	Medium-term programme framework[e]	2006-2009 (4)	2008-2011 (4)	2010-2013 (4)
WHO	Medium-term strategic plan	2006-2007[f] (2)	2008-2013 (6)	2014-2019 (6)

Abbreviations: FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; ILO, International Labour Organization; UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNIDO, United Nations Industrial Development Organization; WHO, World Health Organization.

[a] The plan is renewed every two years.

[b] The current FAO programming cycle should be 2008-2013. By its decision, CL/131 REP (para. 34), however, the Governing Body decided to postpone the issuance of the medium-term plan (2008-2013). As a result, the 2006-2011 plan still applies.

[c] In 2007, the Governing Body decided that the new strategic policy framework should cover six years instead of four. See report of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (GB. 300/12/1 (Rev.), para. 102).

[d] The biennial unified budget and workplan used to be the main planning framework of UNAIDS. In June 2006, the Programme Coordination Board requested the secretariat to develop a strategic framework. As a result, the 2007-2010 strategic framework was adopted. At its 22nd session in April 2008, the Programme Coordination Board decided to continue the quadrennial strategic framework, which serves as the basis of the biennial budget. In addition, it was decided that the current framework would be extended to 2011. Consequently, the next programming cycle will cover the period 2012-2015.

[e] The framework is updated every two years.

[f] Before 2008, the biennial programme budget was the main programming instrument.

C. Strategic planning processes vis-à-vis the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development

24. General Assembly resolutions on the triennial comprehensive policy review form an important basis upon which the operation and performance of the funds and programmes are assessed by intergovernmental mechanisms, in particular by the Executive Boards and the Economic and Social Council.

25. The triennial comprehensive policy review process is conducted according to the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly (regular session, from September to December) and the Economic and Social Council (substantive session in July), as follows:

- The triennial comprehensive policy review is usually conducted by the General Assembly, from October to December of the year of review.
- In the year following the review, the Economic and Social Council approves the management plan submitted by the United Nations system for implementation of the review and undertakes other tasks mandated by the Assembly or the Council. The Assembly may adopt a procedural resolution on operational activities and undertake any mandated tasks.
- In the second year following the review, the Council reviews the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review and adopts a resolution providing substantive guidance for the preparations of the next triennial comprehensive policy review. The Assembly may adopt a procedural resolution on operational activities and undertake any mandated tasks.
- During the year of the triennial comprehensive policy review, the Council considers a report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive review. It does not adopt a resolution, but its debates guide the Secretary-General in preparing draft recommendations to support the General Assembly in conducting the triennial comprehensive policy review in the third quarter of the year.

26. The secretariats of the funds and programmes submit annual reports to the Council on the progress of each fund and programme towards implementing the related General Assembly resolutions, the reforms of the Secretary-General and the follow-up to the international conferences. A consolidated list of issues, which is central to the improved coordination of operational activities, is also submitted by the secretariats to the Council. It serves to identify issues on which the funds and programmes seek guidance from the Council, in particular with regard to the triennial comprehensive policy review. The report of the joint meetings of the four Executive Boards also addresses issues related to the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review.

27. The Council's review is also informed by reports prepared by the Secretariat, in consultation with the United Nations system, on progress and results in the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review and on other topics, as mandated by the General Assembly and the Council.

28. Table 2 shows how the strategic planning processes correspond with the current triennial cycle of the comprehensive policy review, using the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review as a point of reference.

29. The interface between the current planning processes of the four funds and programmes and the triennial comprehensive policy review does not allow the plans to benefit from the guidance of the latest review in a timely manner. The plans are either prepared much ahead of the triennial comprehensive policy review, or are already being implemented when the latest review is being conducted. The timing gaps are rather significant.

30. For instance, the UNFPA plan was ready six months before the conclusion of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review. In the case of UNICEF, the triennial comprehensive policy review in 2004 was conducted during the third year of its previous planning cycle and the 2007 review in the second year of its current planning cycle. For WFP, the plan approved in 2003, was prepared more than 12 months ahead of the 2004 triennial comprehensive policy review; in the next cycle, the new plan approved in 2005, was prepared six months after the 2004 triennial comprehensive policy review; and in the successive cycle, the new plan approved in 2008, was prepared six months after the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review.

31. Overall, the strategic plans have recently tended to include more references to guidance from the triennial comprehensive policy review than they have in the past. The plans usually make broad references to the relevance of the triennial comprehensive policy review in setting their overall context and guiding principles. Some also include a few references to more specific provisions of the review. Even in the absence of direct references to the review, the core principles and policy orientations contained therein are embedded in the directions of the plans, including on the role of the Millennium Development Goals as a key framework; national ownership; capacity-building; partnerships and inter-agency collaboration and coordination; simplification and harmonization; the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as instruments of country coherence, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment; and South-South cooperation.

32. The strategic plans also reflect the demands of programme countries and the Executive Boards, as expressed during the midterm reviews, country and programme evaluations and the consultations held with Member States in preparation for the plans.

33. In some instances, when the strategic plans have been reviewed for approval, or at the annual review of implementation, when the Executive Board has felt that the triennial comprehensive policy review policy orientations were not sufficiently reflected, the Board itself has provided specific directions to integrate more fully the policy orientations into the plans.

34. This was the case for UNDP. In September 2007, its Executive Board endorsed the strategic plan with the proviso that it would be a "living document", which would be reviewed by the Executive Board on a regular basis and would reflect the implications of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review. A detailed document on the implications of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review for the strategic plan including in the chapters on coordination, democratic governance, capacity development and crisis prevention and recovery (see DP/2007/43/Add.2) was submitted at the 2008 annual session of the Executive Board. It should be noted that the Executive Board's decisions, in framing the plan, drew heavily upon the orientations and agreed language of General Assembly resolution 59/250.

35. Although a number of provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review are not directly reflected in the strategic plans, many actions taken in direct response to the review are reflected in the reports of the funds and programmes submitted to the Economic and Social Council, including those involving system-wide collaboration. Information on actions taken on a system-wide basis is also provided in the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review.

Table 2

Strategic planning processes vis-à-vis the triennial comprehensive policy review

A. Triennial comprehensive policy review and United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund planning process[a]

Intergovernmental process	*Pre-TCPR year (2006)*				*TCPR year (2007)*				*Post-TCPR year (2008)*			
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
Economic and Social Council, General Assembly			Economic and Social Council: resolution providing guidance for TCPR	General Assembly: possible procedural resolution on operational activities			Economic and Social Council: debate on TCPR preparations (no resolution)	General Assembly: resolution on TCPR adopted in December			Economic and Social Council: providing guidance on TCPR implement-ation	
UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board	*Previous plan cycle (years 3 and 4)*								*New plan cycle (year 1)*			
First regular session (Jan.)	Plan preparations (UNDP) Report to the Economic and Social Council on TCPR				Strategic plan outline; Report to the Economic and Social Council on TCPR				Report to Economic and Social Council on TCPR			
Annual session (June)		Plan vision (UNDP); annual report				Draft new strategic plan; three-year cumulative reports				Strategic plan (update); annual report		
Second regular session (Sept.)							Revised strategic plan; biennial support budget[b]					

Abbreviations: TCPR, triennial comprehensive policy review; UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund.

[a] UNDP/UNFPA planning process, based on the 2008-2011 plan cycle. The UNDP strategic plan update, discussed at the 2008 annual session, was requested by the Executive Board.

[b] Normally approved at the second regular session.

B. Triennial comprehensive policy review and United Nations Children's Fund planning process[a]

Intergovernmental process	*Pre-TCPR year (2006)*				*TCPR year (2007)*				*Post-TCPR year (2008)*			
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
Economic and Social Council, General Assembly			Economic and Social Council: resolution providing guidance for TCPR	General Assembly: possible procedural resolution on operational activities			Economic and Social Council: debate on TCPR preparations (no resolution)	General Assembly: resolution adopted in December on TCPR			Economic and Social Council: resolution providing guidance on TCPR implement-ation	
UNICEF Executive Board	*Current plan cycle (years 1-3)*											
First regular session (Jan.)	Report to Economic and Social Council on TCPR				Report to Economic and Social Council on TCPR				Report to Economic and Social Council on TCPR			
Annual session (June)		Annual and three-year cumulative report				Annual report				Annual report		
Second regular session (Sept.)			Updated financial estimates, four-year cycle				Updated financial estimates, four-year cycle				Midterm review of strategic plan	

Abbreviations: TCPR, triennial comprehensive policy review; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund.

[a] UNICEF planning process, based on the 2006-2009 plan cycle.

C. Triennial comprehensive policy review and the World Food Programme planning process[a]

Intergovernmental process	*Pre-TCPR year*				*TCPR year*				*Post-TCPR year*			
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
Economic and Social Council, General Assembly			Economic and Social Council: resolution providing guidance for TCPR	General Assembly: possible procedural resolution on operational activities			Economic and Social Council: debate on TCPR preparations (no resolution)	General Assembly: resolution on TCPR adopted in December			Economic and Social Council: providing guidance on TCPR implement-ation	
WFP Executive Board	*Previous plan cycle (years 1 and 2)*						*New plan cycle (year 1)*					
First regular session (Feb.)	Report to Economic and Social Council and FAO Council Report: update on management plan				Report to Economic and Social Council and FAO Council Report: update on management plan				Report to Economic and Social Council and FAO Council Report: update on management plan			
Annual session (June)		Reports: Annual performance; update on management plan				Reports: Annual performance; update on management plan	Revised/ approved new strategic plan at annual Board session			Reports: Annual performance; update on management plan		
Second regular session (Oct./Nov.)				Report: update on management plan				New biennial management plan			Report: update on management plan	

Abbreviations: TCPR, triennial comprehensive policy review; WFP, World Food Programme; FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

[a] Based on TCPR 2007; WFP process based on regular planning time frames.

IV. Options and implications for aligning the strategic planning cycles of the funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review

36. Section IV of the present report examines the implications of changing the comprehensive policy review from a three-year to a four-year cycle, in respect of the following two options:

(a) Option 1: proceed with the triennial comprehensive policy review as scheduled in 2010 and shift to a quadrennial comprehensive policy review beginning in 2011, with the first quadrennial policy review to be held in 2014;

(b) Option 2: hold the first quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2011, thus extending the period for the implementation of the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review by one year.

37. Each option has different implications in terms of aligning the strategic plans of the funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review. Table 3 sets out the implications of both.

A. Overall approach in determining the two options

38. In drawing up the options, certain assumptions were made, as follows:

(a) The objective of the alignment is to ensure that the planning processes draw upon guidance from the comprehensive policy review. The alignment would lead to greater coherence in the policy orientations among the strategic plans;

(b) The schedule of the sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are fixed, in respect of the review process: for the Council, the operational activities segment of the substantive session is held in July; and for the Assembly, the comprehensive policy review starts in October and concludes in December of the comprehensive policy review year;

(c) The current four-year strategic plan cycle is maintained. The planning process of the funds and programmes involves between 9 and 17 months.[3] The planning process should be completed before the end of a current plan cycle, with submission to and approval by the Executive Board of a final (revised) successor plan, at the latest, by the second regular session in September/October of the final year of the ongoing plan. This would give a maximum of seven months to adjust the draft strategic plan after the comprehensive policy review;

(d) The Executive Board's agenda should be set to ensure timely approval of a new plan and availability of the support budget;

(e) The Executive Board would adjust its planning and budgetary cycle to enable the alignment of the planning cycle with the comprehensive policy review;

[3] The planning process would involve approximately 7 to 15 months, from initiation of preparations to submission of a draft plan; and two months, to revise the draft and submit the revised plan. Plan documents need to be submitted at least six weeks in advance of the Board sessions.

(f) Initial consideration of a successor plan may draw upon guidance from the existing resolution on the comprehensive policy review, given the continued relevance of existing policy directions.

39. The following important considerations should be borne in mind when reviewing the options, including:

(a) The amount of time and effort spent on planning activities vis-à-vis implementation;

(b) The need to provide adequate time between the adoption of the most recent resolution on the comprehensive policy review and the finalization of the strategic plan, ensuring the key role of the resolution in guiding preparations for the plans. One year should suffice for drafting and refining a strategic plan in which the comprehensive policy review is adequately considered;

(c) Changes to the present planning and programming systems should have no adverse effect on the continuity of programming support.

B. Two options for aligning the strategic plans of the funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review

40. Paragraphs 41 to 54 below examine the following for each fund and programme: (a) the scenario in terms of alignment of the current cycles with the comprehensive policy review; and (b) the changes required to better align the strategic plans with the comprehensive policy review.

Option 1
Triennial comprehensive policy review in 2010; quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2014

41. The next triennial comprehensive policy review is scheduled to be held in 2010. Option 1 assumes that the review would proceed as planned and that the first quadrennial comprehensive review would be held in 2014.

United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

42. The scenario would be as follows:

- The current UNDP/UNFPA cycle would end in December 2011.
- After the triennial comprehensive policy review concludes in December 2010, there would be a window of about two to three months to prepare draft plans reflecting the outcome of the review before submission of the final strategic plans to the Executive Board in June 2011.
- The successor plans should be adopted no later than at the Executive Board's regular session in September 2011. UNFPA would aim for the adoption of its plan at the annual session in June 2011.
- At the first quadrennial policy review in 2014, the same pattern of interface would take place.

Adjustments needed to ensure alignment

43. There would be no adjustment in the transition to a quadrennial policy review in this scenario.

United Nations Children's Fund

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

44. The scenario would be as follows:

- The current UNICEF cycle would end in 2009. Preparing for the successor plan (2010-2013) would begin in September 2008, with the mid-term review. The most recent General Assembly resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review (resolution 62/208 of 2007) should guide the new planning cycle.
- The interval between the adoption of the 2007 resolution on the review and the adoption of the successor (2010-2013) plan would be about 21 months.
- The new plan would be operational and would be in its second year of implementation by the time the next (2010) triennial comprehensive policy review was to conclude.

Adjustment needed to ensure alignment

45. In order to provide adequate time for the 2010 comprehensive policy review decisions to be reflected in its strategic plan, UNICEF might need to adopt 2012-2015 as the new period for its successor plan. The current cycle would have to be extended by two more years, up to 2011. As mentioned above, UNICEF is considering making such a change. The new plan period would coincide with the UNDP/UNFPA successor plans. In the meantime, UNICEF would have to ensure that the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review was fully reflected in its plan through its mid-term review process.

World Food Programme

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

46. The scenario would be as follows:

- Preparations for a new rolled plan (2010-2013) would start around June 2008 and end in either June or October 2009, when the revised plan would be submitted to and adopted by the Board.
- The new plan would be operational by the time the 2010 triennial comprehensive policy review was to conclude and the second year of implementation (under a new rolled plan) would start when the first quadrennial policy review was to conclude. The interval between the adoption of the 2007 resolution on the review and the adoption of the successor 2010-2013 plan would be between 16 and 22 months.

Adjustment needed to ensure alignment

47. For the 2012-2015 rolled plan, there is adequate time to reflect the 2010 triennial comprehensive policy review. WFP would ideally not roll its plan in 2010

and would consider a fixed four-year planning period, starting in 2012, which would be better synchronized with the comprehensive policy review cycle and also coincide more regularly with the UNDP/UNFPA plan cycles.

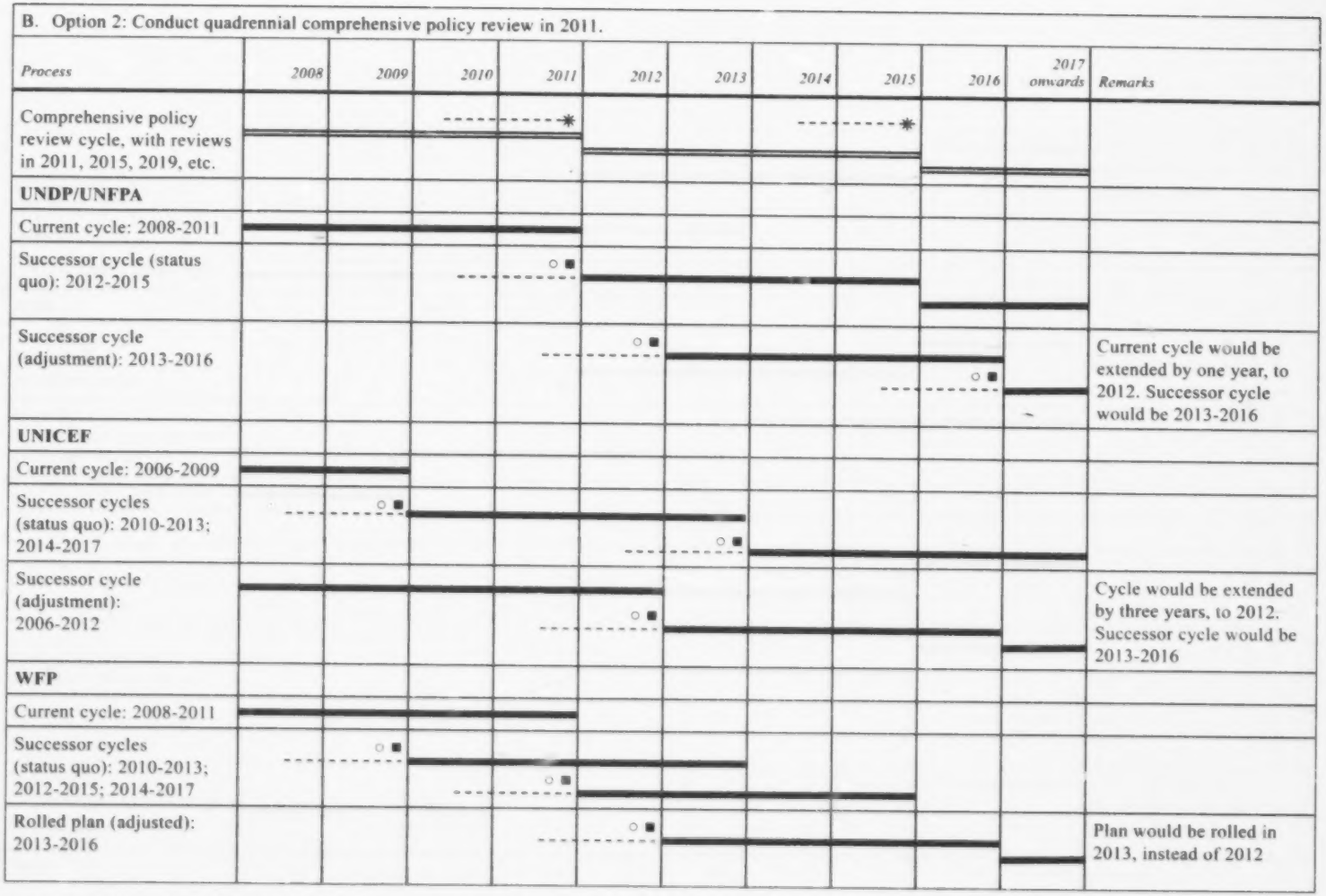
Table 3

Options for aligning the strategic planning processes with the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development

A. Option 1: proceed with the triennial comprehensive policy review as scheduled in 2010 and shift to a quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle beginning in 2011, with the first quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2014.

Process	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*	*2016*	*2017 onwards*	*Remarks*
Comprehensive policy review cycle, with reviews in 2010, 2014, 2018, etc.			✱				✱				Comprehensive policy review cycle starting in 2015 would end in 2018, etc.
UNDP/UNFPA											
Current cycle: 2008-2011											
Successor cycle (status quo): 2012-2015				○ ■							
Successor cycle (adjustment): 2012-2015				○ ■				○ ■			No adjustment
UNICEF											
Current cycle: 2006-2009											
Successor cycles (status quo): 2010-2013; 2014-2017		○ ■				○ ■					
Successor cycle (adjustment): 2012-2015				○ ■							Cycle would be extended two years, up to 2011
WFP											
Current cycle: 2008-2011											
Successor cycle (status quo): 2010-2013		○ ■									
Rolled plan: 2012-2015				○ ■							No adjustment; synchronized with comprehensive policy review

B. Option 2: Conduct quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2011.



Note: assumptions: draft plans are submitted to the Board at its annual session; final (revised) plans are approved at the second regular session, as necessary.

Abbreviations: UNDP, United Nations Development Programme; UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund; UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund; WFP, World Food Programme.

Legend: ---------: planning/preparatory processes, *: General Assembly resolution on comprehensive policy review; ———: comprehensive policy review cycle; ———: planning cycle; ○: draft plan submitted to the Board for review, ■: final/revised plan submitted to/approved by the Board.

Option 2
Quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2011

48. The General Assembly may decide to shift the comprehensive policy review to a quadrennial cycle, by holding the next review in 2011. The possible scenarios and adjustments needed are set out below.

United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

49. The scenario would be as follows:

- The current UNDP/UNFPA cycle would end in December 2011.
- Preparations for and the conduct of the next comprehensive policy review in 2011 would coincide with the period of preparing the successor plan.
- The plan would be ready for approval by the Board at either the annual session in June or the second regular session in September, before the conclusion of the comprehensive policy review in December 2011. The planning process would not benefit from the outcome of the 2011 review.

Adjustment needed to ensure alignment

50. The adjustments needed would be as follows:

- Approval of the successor plan in September 2011 could be postponed to the first regular (January) or annual session (June), in 2012, to allow the comprehensive policy review to be reflected in the plans within a window of two to three months before submission to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2012. However, this process would spillover into the first year of the new plan.
- To ensure alignment with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the current plan could be extended to cover 2012 and the new cycle could start in 2013.

United Nations Children's Fund

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

51. By the time the comprehensive policy review concludes in December 2011, UNICEF would have reached the end of the second year of its planning cycle (under the 2010-2013 cycle).

Adjustment needed to ensure alignment

52. The adjustments needed would be as follows:

- In order for the guidance from the 2011 comprehensive policy review to be reflected in the 2010-2013 plan, adjustments could be made to the plan in midstream.
- If the UNICEF Executive Board decides to extend its current plan by two years, up to 2011, the successor plan starting in 2012 would not benefit from the timely guidance of the 2011 comprehensive policy review. An option

would be to further extend the current plan to 2012. The successor cycle would then cover 2013-2016.

World Food Programme

Scenario under the current strategic planning cycle

53. By the time the comprehensive policy review concludes in December 2011, a new rolled plan (2012-2015) would have been prepared and would be ready for implementation.

Adjustment needed to ensure alignment

54. An option would be to review and update ("roll") the plan starting in 2013 instead of 2012, in order for the plan to draw upon the full guidance provided in the 2011 comprehensive policy review during the planning process that would occur in 2012.

C. Review of the two options

Option 1

55. Option 1 (holding the first quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2014) would require the fewest adjustments to the current and subsequent planning cycles of UNDP, UNFPA and WFP, including their budget processes. Only UNICEF would need to make an adjustment, which would involve extending the current cycle by two years, with a corresponding biennial budget, a change that is in any case currently under consideration by its Executive Board. If UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF align their planning cycles, WFP would not be in alignment with the cycles every two years, if it continued to adopt a two-year cycle. To ensure full alignment, WFP would need to consider a fixed four-year planning cycle, starting in 2012. Its biennial management plan could be more instrumental in providing flexibility to adjust to emerging situations.

Option 2

56. Option 2 (holding the next comprehensive policy review in 2011 instead of 2010) would necessitate that adjustments be made in all four organizations in order to adopt 2013-2016 as a synchronized plan period. Adjustments might involve extending by one year the relevant plan cycle for UNDP and UNFPA, while extending the UNICEF plan by three years and shortening the WFP plan (2010-2013) by one year. In the case of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, this would mean having more time spent on implementation rather than on planning between 2008 and 2012. This option, however, would also have implications for adjusting the biennial support budgets. In the case of UNDP and UNFPA, adjusting the plan period to 2013-2016 might require either special budget approval to cover 2012, or an extraordinary three-year budget to cover the period 2012-2014. In the case of UNICEF, extending its current plan by three years, to 2012, might require either approving a three-year support budget to cover the period 2010-2012, or having a special one-year support budget to cover 2012. In the case of WFP, adjusting its rolled cycle to 2013-2016 (instead of 2012-2015) would not affect the biennial support budget for the period 2012-2013; its next biennial support budget, however,

would cover only up to 2015. WFP could either approve a special support budget to cover 2016 or approve an extraordinary three-year support budget to cover the period 2014-2016.

V. Recommendations

57. The General Assembly may thus wish to consider:

(a) Deciding to change the comprehensive review from a triennial to a quadrennial cycle;

(b) Deciding when to hold the first quadrennial policy review, based on a review of options 1 and 2;

(c) Recommending that UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP undertake the changes, if any, required to align their planning and budgetary processes with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and report to the Economic and Social Council on adjustments made to fit the new comprehensive policy review cycle at the Council's substantive session of 2009;

(d) Recommending that the Executive Board of WFP consider changing the WFP planning cycle in order to align the WFP strategic plan with the new quadrennial policy review.

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Human resources management

Implementation of the mobility policy

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244 that the Secretary-General report on indicators, benchmarks, number of staff, timelines and criteria for the implementation of mobility policies, taking into account the needs of the Organization and ways to protect the rights of staff in the context of the system of administration of justice. The report is also in follow up to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the mobility policy (A/62/215).

* A/63/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) reaffirmed the role of the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, and requested him to make proposals to the Assembly on the conditions and measures necessary for him to carry out his managerial responsibilities effectively. The proposals of the Secretary-General were initially presented in his report entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide" (A/60/692 and Corr.1). The details of the proposed new human resources framework were elaborated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1) following consultations with managers, staff, including in the Staff Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) and the United Nations funds and programmes and in the context of the inter-agency Human Resources Network.

2. One of the components of the new framework for human resources is the proposal of the Secretary-General for an integrated approach to mobility, envisaged as a way to improve the effectiveness of the Organization and to foster the skills and capacity of staff.

3. The proposals of the Secretary-General were reviewed by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. In its resolution 61/244, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to make progress in the area of mobility. In recognition of the increased workload it approved additional resources. In this context, the General Assembly also requested in the resolution that the Secretary-General submit a report on the issue.

4. The Assembly also requested that the Secretary-General submit at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of managed mobility with an assessment and analysis of the relevant issues, including the enforcement of post occupancy limits and financial implications. The present report is in response to that request. It also addresses mobility issues raised by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (see A/62/7/Add.14), the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken to address seven systematic human resources issues raised in the context of the reform of the internal system of administration of justice (see A/63/132), the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on staff mobility in the United Nations (see A/61/806); and, the comments of the Secretary-General on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (see A/61/806/Add.1).

II. Background

5. In the past 20 years, the Organization has experienced a dramatic expansion of its operations, budgets and functions. In addition to its conference servicing responsibilities, the Secretariat today directly manages complex, billion-dollar operations and delivers critical services around the world. In so doing, it works with a wide range of partners, including national Governments, regional organizations, civil society, philanthropic foundations and private sector companies, on a broad range of activities, including of humanitarian, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights, international tribunal, drugs and crime control and other programmes that have a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of people every day.

6. A workforce capable of fulfilling both the normative mandates of headquarters programmes and operational mandates of field activities is the new reality of the United Nations. The mobility of staff is essential to creating such a workforce. It was envisaged that systematic mobility would also help the Organization to:

(a) Increase its flexibility and responsiveness, including the ability to meet rapid deployment requirements, by preparing staff to operate in a multidisciplinary environment;

(b) Improve programme delivery capacity, by addressing chronic vacancy challenges;

(c) Offer increased staff development and career advancement opportunities;

(d) Develop a more comprehensive understanding of, and therefore ability to address, the many facets of the Organization's work programme, through greater integration.

7. The need to increase staff mobility and approach it in a more systematic manner has been an integral part of the human resources strategy of the Secretary-General since the early 1990s. In its resolution 49/222, the General Assembly noted that the human resources strategy of the Secretary-General called for mobility for all new internationally recruited staff, and urged the Secretary General to apply the mobility elements of the new strategy to internationally recruited staff. Later, in its resolution 51/226, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to pursue "the development and implementation of the managed reassignment programmes for entry-level and other staff" and reiterated the importance of making substantive progress towards increased mobility.

8. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/221, emphasized "the requirement of mobility of all internationally recruited staff of the Organization as an integral part of their obligation", and requested the Secretary-General to "give full consideration to the need for greater mobility in the context of human resources planning, in accordance with staff regulation 1.2 (c)". In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to "establish mechanisms towards, and to implement a policy of, enhanced mobility across functions, departments and duty stations".

9. In response to that request, the Secretary-General, in his report on human resources management reform (A/55/253), explained how he envisaged implementing the mobility policy, which included the introduction of time limits for post occupancy. The details of the policy are provided in annex III to that report. After the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/258, the mobility policy was more fully developed and integrated into the new staff selection system, which came into effect on 1 May 2002 (see ST/SGB/2002/5 and ST/AI/2002/4, both issued on 23 April 2002). In subsequent resolutions on human resources management (see resolutions 57/305, sect. II, paras. 47-53, and 59/266, sect. VIII), the Assembly expressed a number of requirements that should be observed in the implementation of the mobility policy. Those requirements are contained in the current policy.

10. An extensive consultative process has been conducted from the inception of the policy through its formal introduction to its current status. Mobility has been discussed in SMCC since 1999. SMCC agreed that mobility should be viewed in its broadest sense, with mobility requirements being fulfilled by movement among

functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and organizations beyond the Secretariat. This statement has become the basis for the definition of mobility used by the Organization in its current policy.

11. Mobility continues to be discussed in staff-management consultations in SMCC. Most recently, a working group comprising staff and management was established following the June 2007 SMCC meeting to monitor the implementation of the mobility policy. Its findings, conclusions and recommendations are included in paragraphs 68 and 69 of this report.

III. Mobility policy

12. The mobility policy was introduced as an integral part of the staff selection system (see ST/SGB/2002/5, ST/AI/2002/4, ST/AI/2005/8, ST/AI/2006/3 and ST/AI/2007/2) to support, inter alia, the development of a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service, and the promotion of greater integration among staff throughout the Secretariat.

13. The main principles guiding the policy are as follows:

(a) Mobility is not an end in itself, but a tool to enable the United Nations to fulfil its operational requirements more effectively;

(b) Mobility patterns vary depending on the requirements of the job and the location;

(c) Mobility is a shared responsibility between the Organization, managers and staff, in which all must play an active role;

(d) Mobility will be integral to career patterns; career progression will depend partially on evidence of mobility.

14. The mobility policy takes into consideration the scope and nature of the work of the Organization, which differs significantly from other international organizations, including those in the United Nations common system.

15. Mobility, defined in its broadest sense, includes movement within and between departments, functions, occupational groups, duty stations and organizations of the United Nations system. A movement to a different position can be at the same level, which is considered to be a lateral move, or to a higher level. The new position may be in the same or a different department or office, in the same or a different duty station, or in the same or a different occupational group.

16. The mobility policy was formally established in May 2002 when the limits on post occupancy (five years up to the P-5 level and six years above the P-5 level) were introduced. The post occupancy period starts anew each time the staff member moves as a result of selection under the staff selection system, within a managed reassignment programme or as a lateral move to a post with different functions.

17. The policy links mobility to career development, requiring two lateral moves before promotion to the P-5 level. It also includes incentives to encourage movement to duty stations with high vacancy rates by permitting staff who have served in Nairobi or in a regional commission other than the Economic Commission for Europe more rapid career progression by requiring only one lateral move.

18. Since 2000, programmes facilitating mobility for staff at the P-2 level have been managed. In offers and letters of appointment, candidates recruited through competitive examination are informed that, when accepting a post in the Organization, they will be expected to serve in two different functions during their first five years of service in the Organization. Such staff are eligible to participate in a managed reassignment programme sometime between their second and third year of service with the Organization. During the managed reassignment programme, staff may apply to P-2 posts in different duty stations, departments, offices and occupational groups. The Office of Human Resources Management conducts a central matching exercise, taking into account the criteria established by managers, the needs of the Organization, and the qualifications and preferences of staff.

19. As a result, since 2000, experience with the P-2 staff demonstrated that when a mobility policy was put in place, staff proactively sought to comply with the policy before being required to do so. In short, over one half of the P-2 staff (51.5 per cent) subject to the mobility policy changed functions outside of a managed reassignment programme. Those moves were as follows: approximately 23 per cent were promoted and 28.5 per cent moved laterally; or were temporarily reassigned within or across departments, duty stations, peacekeeping missions and the United Nations common system. That left less than one half (48.5 per cent) of the P-2 staff requiring to be moved through managed reassignments by the Office of Human Resources Management.

IV. Implementation of the mobility policy

20. Since 2002, systematic efforts have been made to introduce the concept of mobility and create programmes and mechanisms to prepare and support staff. Achievements and activities in that respect have been reported in detail in the reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (see A/61/228 and Corr.1 and A/61/255 and Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1).

21. The main aspects of these preparations include a communication strategy, expanded learning and training opportunities, and greater focus on work-life issues.

A. Communication strategy

22. After the promulgation of administrative instruction ST/AI/2002/4, which institutionalized managed mobility and introduced post occupancy limits for all posts from the G-5 to the D-2 level, a communication campaign was undertaken to familiarize staff globally with the new staff selection system.

23. In 2005, a global information campaign was launched to continue to build awareness among the staff at large of the mobility policy and inform them of the support available to help them to prepare for mobility. Printed and electronic materials containing answers to frequently asked questions and suggestions on preparing for mobility were made widely available on i-Seek. In addition, a dedicated website was launched, and continues to be maintained, to provide staff with up-to-date information on mobility.

24. Additional information on mobility was also provided during the human resources reform outreach in 2006, when reform teams visited 31 duty stations and

met with some 5,000 staff members to provide an opportunity to discuss all aspects of reform, including mobility.

25. In 2007 and 2008, targeted information-sharing campaigns were conducted for staff members who were reaching their post occupancy limits beginning in May 2007. That included both group and one-to-one meetings to ensure understanding of the programme and the support mechanisms available to staff and managers.

B. Training, learning and career support

26. In order to ensure that staff were prepared for mobility, a number of initiatives were undertaken to support staff, including: (a) expanded staff development and career support programmes; (b) the establishment of career resource centres in all major duty stations; (c) a revised electronic performance appraisal system (e-PAS), which includes a career development goal, a learning goal and expression of interest in mission assignment; and (d) the issuance, online, of generic job profiles covering the majority of Professional (P) and General Service posts (G-5 and higher), to clarify job expectations.

1. Expanded staff development and career support programmes

27. A new and enhanced development programme was launched Secretariat-wide, including special career development workshops, to provide staff with new skills and competencies, promote culture change and create awareness of the benefits of mobility.

2. Establishment of career resource centres in all major duty stations

28. The career resource centre, a component of the United Nations Secretariat career development system, is a resource for staff and managers offering career planning and development information, mobility support, learning opportunities and career counselling, while at the same time assisting with the continuous professional growth of staff at all levels. The career resource centres have been encouraging and supporting mobility through networking meetings, information sessions on job opportunities in different duty stations, and peacekeeping missions.

29. Over 5,600 staff members have used the career resource centre at Headquarters since its opening in September 2002 for workshops and individual consultations. By 2007, career resource centres had been established for staff at all offices away from Headquarters and in regional commissions. In 2007, almost 1,400 staff members used the services of the centre in New York, while nearly 1,300 staff members used the centres in other offices away from Headquarters and in regional commissions.

30. Staff can utilize services including written, video and web-based materials and individual career counselling. The centres also provide workshops on topics including career change, networking, preparing job applications (personal history profiles), competency-based interviews and reputation management.

3. Electronic performance appraisal system

31. The e-PAS strengthens the link to career development by encouraging dialogue between staff members and supervisors on their career aspirations and competencies needed for future assignments. It also includes an opportunity for staff members to

indicate their interest in going on a field mission as well as a development and learning goal.

4. Generic job profiles

32. Generic job profiles were developed in 2002 to streamline the classification process and to facilitate the first stage of the staffing process by reducing the amount of time spent in drafting and classifying unique job descriptions prior to the circulation of posts. The use of these profiles has contributed to greater standardization, efficiency, speed and transparency in creating vacancy announcements and clarifying job expectations. The generic job profiles are also continually reviewed and updated to ensure that their content is current.

C. Work-life issues

33. One of the critical obstacles to mobility is the serious difficulty faced by dual-career families. The Organization has made efforts to examine and address work and life issues. Links have been established with associations that provide assistance in this respect. The United Nations has also participated in an inter-agency project fostered by the United Nations Development Group to establish expatriate spouse-support networks at field duty stations. In addition, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/244, invited host countries, as appropriate, to review their policies for granting work permits to spouses of United Nations staff. The Office of Human Resources Management has been assisting in facilitating the work permits for spouses.

34. The Organization continues to address work-life issues that impede mobility and are a barrier to achieving gender parity, in particular concerns affecting women and staff with family responsibilities, including by:

(a) Making every effort, when determining the timing of a geographical reassignment, to minimize the disruption of work in the duty station involved and to facilitate linkages with leave and school calendar requirements and the needs of staff with children with special needs;

(b) Giving priority consideration to staff who have served in hardship or non-family duty stations for headquarters or family duty station postings. The preferences expressed by staff members serving in hardship duty stations (C to E classifications) would be given greater weight than those of other staff members when they apply to posts in the mobility compendium;

(c) Expanding possibilities for dual-career couples, for example by providing career counselling and job search assistance; exploring telecommuting options for spouses; and giving priority consideration to spouses for consulting opportunities, where appropriate;

(d) Within the managed reassignment programme, the Office of Human Resources Management, in cooperation with managers, gives priority to relocation of spouses, subject to availability of suitable posts and satisfactory performance.

35. In recognition of the demands that mobility and relocations place on international Professional staff members and their families and the resulting disruption to personal lives, provisions have been put in place to take into account

family and other special constraints, to the extent possible. In addition, the Organization will continue to explore approaches to facilitate the geographic movement of international Professional staff members, including systematic means and incentives to give priority consideration to dual-career families.

D. Maintaining institutional capacity

36. The mobility policy has been implemented in a gradual and phased manner in order to maintain continuity and quality of service and the institutional memory and capacity of the Organization. In order to ensure that increased mobility does not adversely affect institutional capacity, the Secretariat is actively supporting and developing knowledge management practices. Such practices are important not only for maintaining continuity and quality of service and institutional memory in the context of the implementation of the mobility policy, but also because of anticipated high rates of retirement in the coming years.

37. Managers are responsible for establishing systems that will support mobility, including introducing standard operating procedures to facilitate knowledge management and the preservation of institutional memory, and undertaking succession planning and cross-training to ensure that the institutional capacity to deliver is preserved.

38. Knowledge management initiatives have included rotating staff through different assignments to expand the knowledge base and broaden the shared institutional memory. Many departments have launched such initiatives, which has contributed significantly to the increase in reassignments within departments since 2002.

E. Human resources information technology

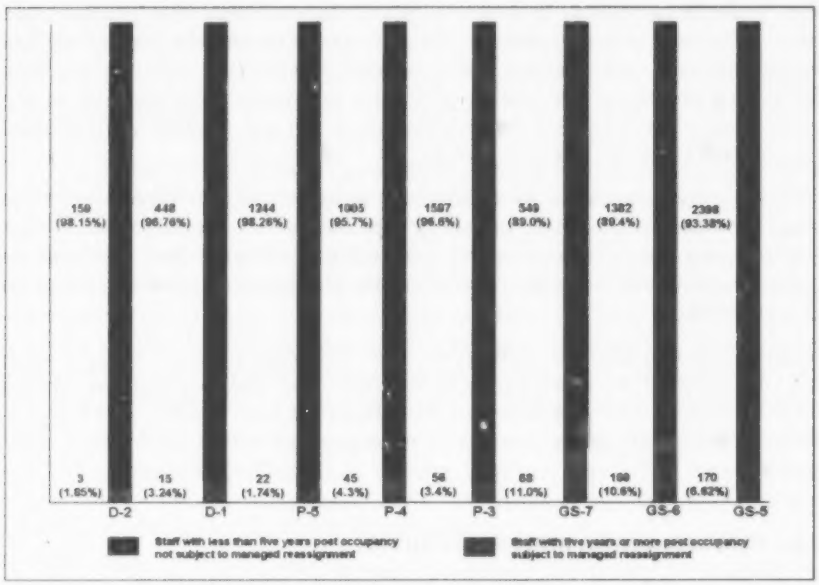
39. In order to ensure the effective implementation of the mobility policy, in particular the managed reassignment programme, extensive preparations took place to enhance organizational information technology tools and to ensure accuracy of records. A dedicated website was designed to provide staff with up-to-date information on the latest developments, including policies and procedures, timelines and learning opportunities. In addition, staff are able to address their queries to a specific e-mail address to get answers from the mobility team in the Office of Human Resources Management.

40. The current information technology system posed numerous challenges, including the accuracy of the records, all of which had to be verified. As a first step, staff who were identified to be reaching their post occupancy limit were requested to complete an electronic fact sheet. This gave an opportunity for staff to rectify any inaccuracies, or to provide missing information in their records. This information was reviewed in cooperation with responsible officials and adjustments were made as necessary. It is anticipated that with the introduction of the forthcoming new talent management system some of these technological challenges will be overcome.

V. Managed reassignment programme

41. One element of the mobility policy is managed reassignment. Staff members who have reached the maximum post occupancy limit are subject to managed reassignment. The managed reassignment programmes have been implemented level by level, in a gradual and phased manner.

Figure
Staff subject to managed reassignment (maximum post occupancy)



42. As can be seen in the above figure, the percentage of staff who reached maximum post occupancy was minimal. Owing to the extensive informational campaign undertaken by the Office of Human Resources Management, from the inception of the mobility policy in 2002, to raise awareness about the advantages of movement, it was expected that many, if not most, would have already taken appropriate steps to move to other positions. Indeed, this was found to be the case in May 2007, when the first managed reassignment programme commenced, and continued to be the case for the second and third programmes. This validated the premise that when a mobility policy is put in place, staff take the initiative to broaden their skills. At the same time, many managers facilitate such moves to obtain different skills and/or build institutional capacity within departments.

43. According to data derived from human resources action plans, the staff mobility index[1] has increased significantly, from 10.8 per cent in 2002, to 21.0 per cent in 2006 and to 27.6 per cent in 2007. That increase confirms that greater awareness and a proactive approach, coupled with expanded learning and career

[1] Mobility index: the annual ratio of the combined number of staff who have moved within and between functions, departments, occupations, duty stations and United Nations organizations compared to the total number of staff in the same department at the beginning of the year.

development programmes, leads to increased mobility outside of managed reassignment.

A. Criteria for implementation

44. The criteria for implementation of the managed reassignment programme are set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/2007/2, which applies to staff appointed at the G-5 to D-2 levels for one year or longer under the 100 series of the Staff Rules who will have reached the maximum post occupancy limit by the time the managed reassignment programme relating to their levels is launched. The managed reassignment programmes under administrative instruction ST/AI/2007/2 do not apply to the following staff members:

(a) Mission staff whose appointment is limited to a particular field mission;

(b) Staff whose appointment is limited to a particular office or programme, as these staff members are subject to a separate managed reassignment programme within the office or programme concerned;

(c) Language staff, defined as including interpreters, translators/précis-writers, editors, verbatim reporters, proofreaders/copy preparers, revisers, terminologists, text processors, language reference assistants and editorial assistants who were appointed after passing a competitive examination for posts requiring special language skills. They will also be subject to a special managed reassignment programme applying to language staff serving at the main duty stations and in the regional commissions;

(d) Staff members in the General Service and related categories who perform the functions of tour guide, language teacher, security and trades and crafts;

(e) Staff members within three years of retirement.

45. The administrative instruction also provides for exemptions for a staff member to participate in a specific exercise. Such exemptions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be granted for a number of reasons, including valid medical grounds or when the technical requirement of the post or its degree of specialization cannot be met by other staff participating in the managed reassignment exercise.

B. Timelines for implementation

1. P-3/G-7 managed reassignment programme

46. The managed reassignment programme for staff at the P-3 and G-7 levels commenced in May 2007. As mentioned above, to determine which of these staff members exceeded the five-year maximum post occupancy limit, the Office of Human Resources Management, executive and human resources offices first reviewed the status of all staff, level by level. To ensure that all moves had been properly recorded, individual staff members were also requested to complete electronic fact sheets and correct any possible errors or omissions. At the end of this process, of the 1,653 staff members at the P-3 level with appointments of one year or more, only 56 (3.4 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy. Similarly, of the 617 staff members at the G-7 level worldwide with appointments of one year or

more, only 68 (11 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed identified as eligible for the managed reassignment programme.

47. Exemptions from the mobility requirement were granted on the basis of medical conditions of staff; personal and family circumstances; highly specialized functions; and, the limited number of G-7 posts in some duty stations. At the completion of the exercise, 16 P-3 and 10 G-7 staff members had moved; 19 P-3 and 31 G-7 staff members had been exempted; and, 21 P-3 and 27 G-7 staff members had been unable to move. Many of the staff who were not able to move were unable to do so because their skills were not compatible with the opportunities in the managed reassignment programme. Of the 16 P-3 staff members who moved, two changed duty stations, at a total cost of $80,500.

2. P-4/G-6 managed reassignment programme

48. The programme began in November 2007. After confirmation of post occupancies through the electronic fact sheet exercise, of the 1,050 staff members at the P-4 level with appointments of one year or more, only 45 (4.3 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy. Of the 1,551 G-6 staff members worldwide with appointments of one year or more, only 169 (10.6 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed eligible for the managed reassignment programme. At the completion of the exercise, three P-4 and 20 G-6 staff members had moved; 19 P-4 and 75 G-6 staff members had been exempted; and, 23 P-4 and 74 G-6 staff members had been unable to move. As was the case with the P-3 G-7 exercise, many staff members were unable to move because their skills were not compatible with the opportunities in the managed reassignment programme. Of the three P-4 staff members who moved, no changes in duty stations occurred.

3. P-5/G-5 managed reassignment programme

49. The programme commenced in May 2008. After confirmation of post occupancies through the electronic fact sheet exercise, of the 1,266 staff members at the P-5 level with appointments of one year or more, only 22 (1.74 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy; and, of the 2,568 G-5 staff worldwide with appointments of one year or more, only 170 (6.62 per cent) had reached maximum post occupancy and were deemed eligible for the managed reassignment programme before exemptions had been approved. At the completion of the exercise, which is expected to be by early November 2008, final statistics will be provided reflecting the number of P-5 and G-5 staff members who moved, were exempted and were unable to move.

4. D-1/D-2 managed reassignment programme

50. The programme is envisaged to commence in November 2008. Staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels with appointments of one year or more will be reviewed for inclusion in this programme. It is expected that this review will be completed in the coming months. There are currently 463 D-1 and 162 D-2 staff members with appointments of one year or more. Of these, 15 D-1 (3.24 per cent) and three D-2 (1.85 per cent) have been identified as having reached their maximum post occupancies. At the completion of the exercise, which is expected to be by December 2008, final statistics will be available.

51. This gradual approach has served to embed mobility in the organizational culture, and has provided sufficient flexibility to adjust the policy as necessary. Therefore, in light of the experience of the managed reassignment programme thus far, it would be prudent to explore other means of achieving the objectives, especially in light of the low percentage of staff who reached their maximum post occupancies and who needed to participate in a managed reassignment programme (see figure in para. 41).

C. Indicators, benchmarks and numbers of staff

52. The mobility of staff is considered as one means of creating a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced staff capable of fulfilling the organizational complex mandates. An essential aspect of this policy is the commitment to continuous learning and its link to career development. In order to be able to analyse the impact of the mobility policy in the future, to ensure that it is achieving its intended purpose, the current status will serve as a baseline for future reviews.

53. In this context, a number of indicators and benchmarks were identified to ensure that refinement of the mobility policy would be a continuous process in which the Organization would continually seek to improve its practices. The indicators reflect staff mobility in general and include types of movement, including lateral moves, promotions and assignments. An additional indicator of staff movement through managed reassignment was added to this report.

54. Mobility indicators from May 2002 to May 2007 reflect movement of staff prior to the expansion of the managed reassignment programme for staff other than at the P-2 level, as shown below:

Mobility	*2002**	*2006**	*2007**
Number of staff	8 415	8 437	8 633
Promotion	730	944	1 108
Reassignment within department	218	374	603
Transfer between departments/offices	90	277	128
Assignment other than a field mission	94	98	350
Assignment to a field mission	96	39	136
Inter-agency mobility	29	36	58
Managed reassignment programme			49**
Mobility index	**10.8 per cent**	**21.0 per cent**	**27.6 per cent**

* Number of staff counted as at 31 December of the preceding year.
** Number of P-3/G-7 and P-4/G-6 movements in 2007/2008.

D. Monitoring and protective measures

55. The managed reassignment programmes have been implemented as flexibly as possible to take into account both the operational needs of the Organization and the aspirations and personal or family circumstances of staff members. In order to

ensure that the mobility policy is achieving its intended purpose, the policy has been monitored closely by the Office of Human Resources Management and is continually being reviewed.

56. Recognizing the necessity to ensure consistency in application of the criteria, taking into account the needs of the Organization and protection of the rights of staff, the managed reassignment programmes are centrally coordinated for all international staff. Programmes for staff in the General Service and related categories are implemented at respective duty stations, under the guidance of, and with oversight by, the Office of Human Resources Management. All requests for exemptions are reviewed and decided on by the Office. In addition, staff members can avail themselves of the informal and formal mechanisms of the system of administration of justice should they consider administrative decisions to be incorrect.

57. Furthermore, as agreed in SMCC in June 2007, the working group, comprised of staff and management representatives to monitor the implementation of the mobility policy, presented its observations and recommendations to the SMCC plenary in June 2008. The working group concluded that there was no contention between staff and management on the broad concept of mobility, as expressed in General Assembly resolution 55/258. There was general agreement that mobility would contribute to both strengthening the Organization and the skill sets of staff members, but there were diverging views on the success of the managed mobility programme, on the mechanisms used to implement the programme, and on the need to treat all categories of staff equally in the process.

58. The working group identified many areas that required further clarification and/or review in determining the way forward, including the outcome of deliberations of the General Assembly on related human resources matters, such as the harmonization of contracts and conditions of service. While considerable movement of staff between and within departments had been noted, it was felt that greater geographic mobility would only be achieved following the successful resolution of major impediments such as spouse employment, the effective transfer of knowledge, work-life issues and the broader dissemination of information on financial incentives linked to mobility and hardship.

59. Nevertheless, at SMCC it was agreed by both management and staff that the first round of managed mobility be completed to ensure consistent treatment among all levels of staff affected by the policy. Pending completion of the D-1/D-2 exercise, envisaged to commence in November 2008, the managed mobility programmes would be suspended, so that a review could be undertaken over the course of the next year to incorporate lessons learned.

VI. Observations

60. The overall aim of mobility is to contribute to the development of a versatile and multi-skilled workforce, and to stimulate learning and development of skills. In this context, the mobility policy encourages staff movement, including by applying for posts under the staff selection system, through the managed reassignment programmes, opportunities for mission detail and other temporary assignments, and service with organizations of the common system.

61. This approach to mobility represents a significant change for staff and managers as, until now, staff movements were for the most part not systematically encouraged or centrally coordinated. It is recognized that, as with any organizational change in a large, complex environment, this new approach may give rise to concerns. These concerns will continue to be addressed through communication, training and counselling on a one-to-one basis when necessary. At the same time, it should be noted that many staff welcome the expanded opportunities that the mobility policy enables.

62. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in people" (A/61/255), much can and should be done to improve mobility, as the current policy applies only to a limited number of staff recruited under the 100 series of the Staff Rules. Thus, until the Organization has one contract and one series of Staff Rules (100 series) for all staff, the Organization cannot fully harness the valuable experience, skills and knowledge of large numbers of staff. More duty stations would then be available to more staff to move more easily without jeopardizing their status or development.

63. The increasingly integrated nature of the work of the Organization in the field, evidenced most clearly by Security Council mandates for "integrated" United Nations peace operations, demands a workforce that has an integrated Headquarters and field perspective and is able to work collaboratively across the common system, including the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. All United Nations staff members should have equal access to opportunities in the Organization and equal responsibility to share the burden of service in hardship duty stations, and contribute their services to challenging field activities.

64. The integrated nature of work makes movement within the United Nations common system increasingly important. However, the current policies do not easily facilitate movement across the system. Inter-agency movement is further impacted by unequal conditions of service, as the funds and programmes offer better compensation packages that also improve work-life balance in non-family duty stations. Thus, while some progress has been made in this area, additional measures are required to address this major concern of harmonization of conditions of service.

65. In order to achieve what the mobility policy originally set out to do, namely increase flexibility and responsiveness; improve programme delivery capacity; address chronic vacancy challenges; and develop a more comprehensive understanding of, and ability to address, the many facets of the work of the Organization through greater integration, the Organization needs to operate under one series of Staff Rules.

66. Furthermore, with the establishment of more proactive and strategic workforce planning based on a systematic analysis of the supply and demand requirements, together with the use of rosters and skills inventories, the Organization will be in a better position to undertake a full assessment and do a proper analysis to refine the policies in the light of experience. Strategic workforce planning is essential to assess existing skills gaps that may have resulted from the increase in the mobility index from 10.8 per cent (2002) to 27.6 per cent (2007).

67. Therefore, while the Secretariat is strongly committed to mobility as a means to develop a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil

service, and to promote greater integration of staff throughout the Secretariat, including in field operations, more work needs to be done.

VII. Conclusion

68. The Organization will continue to refine the policies in the light of experience. As endorsed by SMCC, the managed reassignment programmes will be suspended in their current format after the final exercise is concluded for the staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels. Also endorsed by SMCC, a comprehensive review of the mobility policy will be undertaken in consultation with all stakeholders, including staff, managers and Member States. The policy needs to be further refined and would take into account recommendations emanating from the Human Resources Management Task Force.

69. Recommendations include:

(a) To review the following elements of mobility:

(i) Functional and occupational mobility for staff at the Professional and higher levels with a view to increasing geographical mobility;

(ii) Enforcement of post occupancy limits;

(iii) Incentives for staff members to move to duty stations with high vacancy rates;

(iv) Ways to address challenges faced by families (e.g., spouse employment) and non-traditional arrangements;

(v) Exchange programmes with international organizations outside the United Nations system;

(vi) Ways to enhance career development of locally recruited staff in lieu of managed reassignment programmes;

(vii) Mapping of posts (rotational/non-rotational);

(b) To institute a programme to publicly recognize and reward service in the field;

(c) To incorporate a "mobility requirement" in new offers of appointment, reappointments and contracts for Professional staff with appointments of one year or longer when mobility is redefined or during the exercise for the conversion of contracts, whichever is earlier;

(d) To undertake additional efforts to address work and life issues, such as improvements to host country agreements to enable spouses to work and for family members to remain in the country when the staff member is in another duty station temporarily;

(e) To establish occupational networks, originally introduced in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/5, as an integral component of the staff selection system to create a more strategic approach to mobility. Occupational networks would:

(i) Encourage and support mobility by building on affinities between functions; breaking down departmental silos; strengthening multidisciplinary

approaches and creating a more versatile, multi-skilled and experienced international civil service;

(ii) Promote greater opportunities for staff for the development of their skills, experience and competencies through career paths;

(iii) Facilitate the projections of overall occupation-wide staffing needs, and assist in the deployment of staff among departments, established duty stations and field missions, and address the high vacancy rate.

70. **The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of 'his report.**